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H. H. Cameron.



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THE
HOLY LYFE AND HISTORY
OF
SAYNT WERBURGE

VERY FRUTEFULL
FOR ALL CHRISTEN PEOPLE TO REDE.

EDITED BY
EDWARD HAWKINS, ESQ.

PRINTED FOR THE CHETHAM SOCIETY.
M.DCCC.XLVIII.

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INTRODUCTION.

A Society, established for the publication of historical and literary remains connected with the Palatine counties of Lancaster and Chester, could not fail to direct their early attention to the history of a person so illustrious by her birth, so reputed for the sanctity of her life, so memorable for her imputed miracles, and whose name is familiar to every inhabitant of these palatine counties as the patroness saint of the cathedral of the diocese. Amongst the earliest notices issued by the Society was an announcement of their intention to publish a reprint of Henry Bradshaw's *Life and History of St. Werburgh* from the very rare quarto of 1521, printed by Pynson. That intention is now fulfilled by the present volume, containing the poem of which "*Harry Braddeshaa, of Chestre Abbay, monke,*" is partly author, partly translator.

In the "prologue of the translatour," as he calls himself, he says, p. 4.

I purpose to wryte a legende good and true
And translate a lyfe into Englysshe doubtles;

and at p. 26 gives an account of the work, which he purposes to translate.

For as declareth, the true Passyonary
A boke wherin, her holy lyfe wryten is
Whiche boke remayneth, in Chester monastery

I purpose by helpe of Jhesu kyng of blys
 In any wyse to reherse, any sentence amys
 But folowe the legende, and true hystory
 After an humble style, and from it lytell vary.

These variations, be they "lytell" or much, seem to be founded upon histories and chronicles, which have been published, and are accessible to all who choose to trace the authorities for some of these legendary notices.

Unto this rude werke, myne auctours these shalbe
 Fyrst the true legende, and the venerable Bede
 Mayster Alfrydus, and Wyllyam Malvysburye
 Gyrarde Polycronycon, and other mo in deed. p. 5.

The "true legende" is doubtless the "true Passyonary" mentioned above, which is afterwards called the "thrid Passyonary;"

And as the history, of her lyfe doth expresse
 In a boke nominat, the thrid passionary; p. 120.

which also seems to have contained an account of more miracles than the translator was perhaps quite prepared to believe, or at least did not deem it quite expedient to publish at this time.

To expresse all myracles, written in the place
 In a boke nominate, the thrid passionarye
 It wolde require, a longe tyme and space
 To the reders tedious, (nomervayle sothly)
 Where we omytte, to writte of them specially
 But touched in generall, unto your audience. p. 197.

The poem is preceded by a "Prologe in honour and laude

of Sainte Werburge and to the prayse of the translatur by J. T.," whose name and profession we have been as little able to ascertain as was Herbert, when he first noticed this work.

Of the main body of the poem then Bradshaw must be considered as a translator from a work,* in the Latin language, then remaining in the library of Chester monastery, called the true or third Passionary, inserting such additional matter as he was pleased to extract from the various chronicles which he mentions. He was however not merely a translator, but an author, for the "Prologes" to the first and second books, pp. 1 and 134, "A litell orison or prayer to the blessed virgine Saynte Werburge," p. 205, and the "breve conclusion," p. 207, are certainly original compositions of Bradshaw himself, and it is not improbable that he was also author of chapters 21 and 22, in the second book, being "A breve rehersall of the myracles of Saynt Werburge after her translacion to Chestre," and "A charitable

* The author of the original work here translated is not known, nor was Bradshaw himself acquainted with his name, for in "a Balade to the auctour," published with the translation the very year in which it was concluded, is mentioned (p. 210) that "uncertayne was his name."

Warton observes "a great translator of the lives of the Saxon Saints from the Saxon, in which language only they were then extant, into Latin, was Goscelinus, a monk of St. Austin at Canterbury, who passed from France into England about 1058. Among the rest were the lives of St. Werburgh, St. Ethelred and St. Sexburgh, most probably the legends which were Bradshaw's originals." This conjecture can scarcely be reconciled to the above assertion with regard to the original author, that "uncertayne was his name."

mocion and desyre to all the inhabytauntes within the Countie Palatine of Chestre for the monasterie."

The poem is written in stanzas of seven lines each, of which the first and third, the second, fourth and fifth, and the sixth and seventh, rhyme with each other. To this arrangement there are a few exceptions; at p. 153 is a stanza of eight lines, of which the first and third, the second, fourth, fifth and seventh, the sixth and eighth, rhyme with each other. At pp. 115, 116, 126, are three stanzas similarly arranged, in which three cases however the last line is Latin. Chapters 21, 22 and 23, and two balades at pp. 211 and 212 are all written in similar stanzas of eight lines.

Throughout the poem, in order to produce, in reading, anything of rythmical intonation, the accent must be laid strongly upon the very last syllable of the line, even in cases where, according to the modern mode of pronunciation, the last syllable is as little dwelt upon as possible. Every stanza affords instances of this intonation, and it is scarcely necessary to refer to any particular passages, but in p. 125, the following illustrations may be observed, — gostly and remedy, parte and trinite, odour, savour, hour; body, clergy, verily, &c. &c.

The Latin language was probably very familiar to our author, for the reader can scarcely fail to be struck with the frequent introduction of quaint Latinisms. At p. 150 we find "With grace circumfulced and lyghtned was England." In the same page he talks of faith enduring "without recidivation," and in p. 152, of faith being "remanent;" we find "promyttynge," p. 163, 166; "facundious," p. 209,

210 ; “desydery,” 56, and several others may be discovered by consulting the glossary. The greater number of these words it will be perceived were derived directly from the Latin, but not unfrequently, as is most usual in writers of that age, the Latinisms appear to have been introduced under the influence of the French language upon our own, rather than directly from the Latin. At p. 153, he speaks of St. Alban’s monastery being edified, from *edifier* ; p. 115, of this life being *caduce* ; p. 137, of the abbey of Chester envired with walles ; baptism is written baptym, *baptime* ; convent, *covent* ; sautyng, from *assaut* ; and dygne of dutye, from *digne*. The termination of the past tense, derived from the Latin participle, is of almost universal occurrence, as maculate, preparate, coronate, nominat, tumulate, &c. &c.

At pp. 147, 158 and 179 are quotations from Henry of Huntingdon, which contain some errors ; it is as well therefore to reprint them here from Savile’s edition of that author.

p. 147.

Nobilitas innata tibi probitatis honorem
 Armipotens Alfrede dedit, probitasque laborem,
 Perpetuumque labor nomen, cui mixta dolori
 Gaudia semper erant ; spes semper mixta timori.
 Si modo victor eras, ad crastina bella pavebas.
 Si modo victus eras, ad crastina bella parabas.

Jam post transactos vitæ regnique dolores
 Christus ei sit vera quies, sceptrumque perenne.

Henrici Huntingdoniensis, Hist. lib. v.

p. 158.

O Elfreda potens, O terror virgo virorum
 Victrix naturæ, nomine digna viri.
 Tu quo splendidior fieres, natura puellam,
 Te probitas fecit nomen habere viri
 Te mutare decet sed solam, nomina sexus,
 Tu regina potens, rexque trophæa parans.
 Jam nec Cæsarei tantum meruere triumphi
 Cæsare splendidior virgo virago vale. *Ibid.*

p. 179.

Auctor opum, vindex scelerum, largitor honorum,
 Sceptringer Edgarus regna superna petit.
 Hic alter Salomon, legum pater, orbita pacis ;
 Quod caruit bellis claruit inde magis.
 Templa Deo, templis monachos, monachis dedit agros
 Nequitæ lapsum, justitiæque locum. *Ibid.*

In the quotation from William of Malmsbury, p. 176, in the last line, for "a" read "de."

The first book of this poem contains an account of the descent of St. Werburge from four royal families, her character, the history of her life and those of some of her more immediate relations ; it also relates the principal circumstances of her death and subsequent removal and condition of her body. The second book is chiefly devoted to the circumstances which connected her with the city of Chester, of which she was considered the patron saint. The author at p. 4 calls her prioress and lady of the Abbey of Chester : but she was never so, except under the general appointment of Ethelred, who made her (p. 85)

lady ruler and presydent
 Over all the nonnes, of every monastery
 Within his realme.

Ethelred indeed (p. 86)

Edyfyed a collage chyrche, notable and famous
 In the subbarbes of Chester, pleasaunt and beauteous
 In honour of God, and the Baptyst Saynt Johan,

but it does not appear that she had any authority in this establishment, and indeed this foundation had not any connexion with the Abbey of Chester.

It is probable that he calls her "Pryores" of the Abbey merely because she was enshrined there, and was considered the patroness saint of that monastery and city.

To this imputed patronage of the city and its religious establishments we doubtless owe the existence of this poem; for when the translator felt that as "a relygyous man, losynge of tyme could not him excuse, and that for avoiding such great folyshenes he ressolved

Some small treatyse to wryte brevely" p. 4.

there can be little doubt that he was led to the choice of his subject from a desire to do honour to

Blessed vyrgyn Werburge, my holy patronesse, p. 5.

indeed he acknowledges as much in his "breve conclusion,"

The cause movyng us, this werke to begyn
 It was to avoyde, slouth and idelnes
 And most for the love, of this holy virgin
 Whiche is our sufferayn lady and patrones. p. 209.

b

The reader will probably not be displeased that this poem should be accompanied by Warton's criticisms and estimate of its character, which are, therefore, here quoted at length.

"Henry Bradshaw has rather larger pretensions to poetical fame than William of Nassington, although scarcely deserving the name of an original writer in any respect. Before the year 1500 he wrote the *Life of St. Werburge*, a daughter of a King of the Mercians, in English verse. This poem, beside the devout deeds and passion of the poet's patroness saint, comprehends a variety of other subjects; as a description of the kingdom of the Mercians, the lives of Saint Ethelred and Saint Werburge, the foundation of the city of Chester and a chronicle of our Kings. It is collected from Bede, Alfred of Beverley, Malmesbury, Gerardus Cambrensis, Higden's *Polychronicon*, and the *Passionaries* of the female Saints Werburgh, Ethelred and Sexburgh, which were kept for public edification in the choir of our poet's monastery. Bradshaw is not so fond of relating visions and miracles as his argument seems to promise. Although concerned with three saints, he deals more in plain facts than in the fictions of religious romance; and, on the whole, his performance is rather historical than legendary. This is remarkable in an age when it was the fashion to turn history into legend.

"His fabulous origin of Chester is not so much to be imputed to his own want of veracity as to the authority of his voucher, Ranulph Higden, a celebrated chronicler, his countryman, and a monk of his own abbey. He supposes

that Chester, called by the ancient Britons *Caer Lleon*, or, the city of legions was founded by *Leon gaur*, a giant, corrupted from *Leon vaur*, a great legion.

The founder of Chestre, as sayth Policronicon
Was *Lleon Gauer*, a myghty stronge gyaunt
Whiche buylded caves, and dongions many one
No goodly buyldyng, propre ne pleasaunt — p. 148.

he adds with equal attention to etymology,

But the *Kynge Leil*, a Briton sure and valiaunt
Was founder of Chestre, by pleasaunt buyldyng
And of *Caerleil*, also named by the kynge. p. 148.

But a greater degree of credulity would perhaps have afforded him a better claim to the character of a poet; and, at least we should have conceived a more advantageous opinion of his imagination had he been less frugal of those traditionary fables, in which ignorance and superstition had clothed every head of his argument.

“The most splendid passage of this poem is the description of the feast (ch. xvi. pp. 58—65) made by King *Wulfer* in the Hall of the Abbey of *Ely* when his daughter *Werbuge* was admitted to the veil in that monastery; among other curious anecdotes of ancient manners, the subjects of the tapestry with which the hall was hung, and of the songs sung by the minstrels on this solemn occasion, are given at large.

“If there be any merit of imagination or invention to which the poet has a claim in this description, it altogether consists in the application. The circumstances themselves

are faithfully copied by Bradshaw from what his own age actually presented. In this respect, I mean as a picture of ancient life, the passage is interesting, and for no other reason. The versification is infinitely inferior to Lydgate's worst manner.

"Bale, a violent reformer, observes that our poet was a person remarkably pious for the times in which he flourished. This is an indirect satire on the monks and on the period which preceded the Reformation. I believe it will readily be granted that our author had more piety than poetry. His prologue contains humble professions of his inability to treat lofty subjects and to please light readers."

Warton's remarks are too disparaging; Dibdin, who gives an extended account of the poem, forms a higher estimate of Bradshaw's merit. "It is presumed," he observes, "that his name will stand among the foremost in the list of the poets of the period wherein he wrote. His descriptions are oftentimes happy as well as minute; and there is a tone of moral purity and rational piety in his thoughts, enriched by the legendary lore of romance that renders many passages of his poem exceedingly interesting."

If it is not allowed to rank Bradshaw, according to Dibdin's estimate, among the foremost in the list of poets of his period, it is unjust to place him in so low a rank among his cotemporaries as the severity of Warton seems to demand. There is a tone of moral principle and devotional piety so unaffectedly pervading the whole volume, and so easily and naturally introduced, as to impress the reader with the conviction that they had an

habitual influence upon his mind and heart, and exhibited themselves without an effort and almost unconsciously in all his expressions. There is much strength and apparent sincerity in his numerous exhortations to piety and devotion. In his "charitable mocion," (ch. xxii. p. 199 et seq.) he urges his readers to benevolence and to the support of the monastery, with great power, and sets before them every variety of motive that could be supposed to influence persons under the peculiar circumstances in which each might be placed. He appeals to the piety of their forefathers, and endeavours to work upon all their passions, affections and emotions, upon their love and fear, gratitude and duty. His familiarity with the Latin language has been already noticed, and the reader can scarcely have failed to observe his intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings, numerous scripture personages are adduced as models and examples of the various virtues, which adorn the christian character; and the language of scripture is constantly apparent in his exhortations and descriptions, especially where the character and acts of St. Werburge are his subjects. Moral maxims and proverbs, the concentrated wisdom of ages, seem to have been familiar to him, and may be detected in many of his pages. If

Manners maketh man .
Quoth William of Wykeham,

Bradshaw observes,

by a proverbe certain
Good maners and conynge maken a man, p. 134.

another of his proverbs is worth pointing out, as it exem-

plifies the use of the word "lad" to signify a person of low degree,

by a proverb auntyent

A lad to wedde a lady is an inconvenyent. p. 38.

The sententious brevity of a proverb is sometimes lost and weakened by adapting it to the metre of his poem ; Man proposes, God disposes, is expanded into

Tho mankynde prepose his mynde to fulfyll
Yet God dysposeth all thyng at his wyll. p. 119.

The remark of Warton is probably just, that had he had a greater degree of credulity he would have had a greater chance of being poetical ; credulity indeed does not seem to be his failing, for though he records many miracles of St. Werburge and with some appearance of belief in their reality, it is quite clear that he omits many marvellous tales, which might have been supplied by the original work, but which would be to the "reders tedious (no mervayle sothly)," and to which he was not himself quite prepared to give full credit. It is true that he gives more, many more, than sufficient to satisfy any modern readers ; but the Reformation was approaching, the shadows of coming events were already apparent, and were exerting their almost unobserved influence upon the feelings and opinions of the people, and Bradshaw had evidently less faith in the miraculous legends of his monastery, than had been enjoyed by his predecessors ; in truth there appears to be occasionally a lurking humour in his description, which betrays as much disbelief in his own narrative, as the temper of the times, and the still lingering credulity of his cotemporaries would permit. If his

own good sense and the growing enfranchisement of the period from the bondage of superstition, and papal impositions, checked in him any tendency to imaginative flights and poetic paroxysms; it will not be denied that he frequently exhibits considerable strength of expression in his language, and great powers in his vivid and graphic descriptions. A goodly specimen of railing may be found in Book I. ch. x. where St. Ermenylde, St. Werburge and her brothers severely rebuke Werbode for his "grevous presumpcyon" in aspiring to the hand of St. Werburge. Many of the miraculous cures are described with great force; and it will be difficult to find, in any cotemporary author, so lively, picturesque and humorous a narrative as that of the unhappy geese of Wedon

who went

Mekely as yf they had reason naturall
Unto her presence,

and with

Theyr wynges traylynge entred into the hall. p. 98, 99.

Had his merits as a writer been less than they really are, his meek and humble apology for his defects, which he puts forth in his "breve conclusion," would deprecate all severity of criticism. He had clearly not a musical ear, his versification is not smooth and harmonious, and his naturally defective appreciation of rythmical intonation has been much exaggerated by the awkward and difficult arrangement of the stanza which he has adopted. With an easier metre his lines might have flowed with more ease and grace, and would have better conciliated the favour of his readers.

Rugged however and harsh as his verse may be, and low as may be the estimation of Bradshaw as a poet, the amiable and pious tone of the whole poem cannot but impress the mind with agreeable feelings, and excite admiration and affection towards him as a man and a christian.

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Of Henry Bradsha, Braddshaa or Bradshaw, who calls himself, p. 3, "a religious man," *i. e.* an ecclesiastic, nothing more is known than what is recorded by Anthony Wood, who says, "he was born in the auncient town of Westchester, commonly called the city of Chester, and being much addicted to religion and learning, when a youth, was received among the Benedictine monks of St. Werburgh's monastery in the said city. Thence at riper years he was sent to Gloucester college in the suburb of Oxon, where after he had passed his course in theology among the novices of his order he returned to his cell at St. Werburge and in his elder years wrote, *De antiquitate et magnificentia urbis Cestriæ chronicon, etc.* and translated from Latin into English a book which he thus entitled, *The life of the glorious Virgin St. Werburge: Also many miracles that God had shewed for her.* London, 1521, 4to. He died in fifteen hundred and thirteen (5 Henry 8) and was buried in his monastery, leaving then behind him other matters to posterity, but the subject of which they treat I know not."—Athen. Oxon. edit. by Dr. Bliss, v. I. p. 18.

The date of his death is expressly stated in "A balade to the auctor," which is appended to the poem, by some unknown friend, and, probably, monk of the same monastery.

He laments the death of Bradshaw,

a floure most riall
 Redolent in cronicles with historicall syght
 Whiche nowe is departed from this temporall lyght
 The present yere of this translacion
 M.D.XIII. of Christis incarnacion
 Cujus anime propicietur deus. p. 210.

Of the works of Bradshaw above mentioned or alluded to, that "De antiquitate et magnificentia," etc., nothing is now known, but it is not improbable that some fragments dispersed in various MSS. descriptive of this city may have been extracted from his chronicle. The life of the glorious virgin St. Werburge is the work which is here reprinted. Of the "other matters to posterity" nothing more is positively known to us than to Wood, but Mr. Herbert was in possession of a poem, "The lyfe of St. Radegunde," also printed by Pynson, of which he says, "although the name of the author or translator of this book does not decidedly appear on the face of it, yet on comparing it with the Life of St. Werburge it may readily be perceived that both were penned by the same person, Henry Bradshaw ; but hitherto omitted in every list of his works." *Typographical Antiquities*, p. 294.

Mr Cowper in his Summary of the life of St. Werburgh quotes more than once the Latin life of this lady by Bradshaw, and these extracts he derives from Leland's *Collectanea*, but where this collector discovered his original authority does not appear. Mr. Cowper is probably mistaken in ascribing the work to Bradshaw's own pen ; it is much more probable

that the extracts are derived from the original chronicle or passionary, which Bradshaw translated into English verse, for he has himself distinctly stated that his poem was a translation from a Latin history preserved in his monastery; he gives no intimation of his having written it himself, and it is also stated that the name of the original author was unknown.

Although this work is of very great rarity, it is not so much so as was at one time supposed. The earliest mention of the book, which we have discovered, is by Maittaire, who in 1741 inserts it in a list of books not before noticed. In 1749, Ames in his *Typographical Antiquities*, mentions the work, and so describes it as to leave no doubt of his having had a copy before him. Notwithstanding all this, Dr. Foote Gower in his "*Sketch of Materials for the History of Cheshire*" in 1771, doubts the existence of such a printed volume; and in a subsequent advertisement, arguing upon the evidence for and against the existence of such a work, adds "no possible enquiries of mine have been able to discover the least trace of it, in any private as well as in any public repository," and closes the difficulty with the good humoured expression of Sir Roger de Coverly, "that much may be said on both sides."

There are, however, at least five copies in existence; one is in the Minster Library at York, and my kind friend Mr. Davies informs me that it is in modern binding, that it is imperfect at the beginning, wanting the first 22 pages, the first present leaf being C. 1. on page 23, that it is otherwise

clean and in good preservation. It once belonged to Dr. Marmaduke Fothergill, and in the margin of one of the leaves near the close of the book, appears the name of Gervas Clifton, to whom it had at one time probably belonged.

Two copies are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, one of which had been purchased at Warwick, July 2, 1730, by Mr. West, at the sale of whose books in 1773, it was bought by Mr. Gough, for £2. 15*s.* and with the other treasures of his collection now reposes in the Bodleian.

The other copy belonging to the same library bears the autographs of former owners "Wylliã. Watson," and "Richard Cartwright," "Homfree," "William Peate," "John, and Mary Seres," and on one margin appears "John .. (cut off.)"

So God me save he is a loute
I put you all out of doute
By me John Beade, draper."

It was subsequently the property of Selden, from whom it passed to the Bodleian.

A fourth copy is in the British Museum. In the sale catalogue of the books of Mr. Marten of Palgrave, in lot 196, was a Life of St. Werburgh, which is supposed to be the same copy which came into the Pearson Library, which was sold in 1788, (lot 2374 the Life of St. Werburgh) and was bought by Isaac Reed for £1. 3*s.* At his sale in 1807 it formed lot 6972, and was purchased by I. L., *i. e.* I. Lochee, the auctioneer in King Street, Covent Garden, for £18. He is supposed to have purchased it for Mr. Parke, the editor and enlarger of Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, who

afterwards sold it for 28 guineas to Mr. Heber, who inserted in the volume the following note. "This book is of the first order of rarity, not being in the Royal, British Museum, Bodleian, Spencer, Hunter, Blenheim, or Blandford collections, indeed no other copy is known to exist in any repository public or private, except one in Mr. Heber's library. Mr. Heber paid 28 guineas to Mr. P— for his copy 10 years ago, a time when 5*s.* went further in the purchase of a scarce book than a pound sterling does now." This note upon a scrap of paper was probably intended as a communication to some friend, perhaps to Mr. Dibdin, and, after having been copied for that purpose, was pasted into the volume as it now appears. At Mr. Heber's sale in 1834 it was purchased for the British Museum for £19. 5*s.*

The fifth copy is probably the one stated by Herbert, in his edition of Ames' *Typographical Antiquities*, to have been then in his own possession, and which is supposed to have passed into the hands of Mr. Woodhouse, in whose sale in 1803 it was lot 859, and was sold to Mr. Hill, the prototype of Paul Pry, for £31. 10*s.* This gentleman's library, rich in early poetry, was sold to Messrs. Longman, and Co., and was the foundation of their "*Bibliotheca Anglo-poetica*," in which this book was priced £63., and sold to Mr. Midgely, whose library was brought to the hammer in 1818 at Messrs. Saunders, when this rare volume was purchased by Mr. Hibbert for £42. At this gentleman's sale it was purchased by Thorpe for £19. 10*s.*, from whom it passed to the library of Mr. Miller, the present possessor.

It may be remarked that this work is the earliest, in print, which refers to Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, and his dignity in the earldom, see pp. 181, 182. The passage was cited in an affidavit made in 1843 in "the Consistory Court of Chester," and appears in an Appendix to an appeal from "the Chancery Court of York, in the goods of Anne Rothwell Wignall, commonly called Anne Rothwell, Spinster, deceased, in the Judicial Committee of Her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council."

The errors in this reprint that may be chargeable to the press occur at

page 18, line 9, T *read* To,

page 94, line 10, ha *read* had,

page 99, line 15, compassyon *read* compassyon,

and page 112, last line but one, Gorrupte *read* Corrupte ; but it is to be feared that some trifling errors in transcription, such as kingdome for kyndome, befound for befounde, us for vs, would be discovered by an accurate collation. Pynson is not uniform in the use of his i, his y, and the insertion or omission of the final e.

The collation of the book is thus : it commences with the Title-page and Wood-cut of St. Werburge, The prologe of J. T. and the Table of the boke, the second Title-page, with

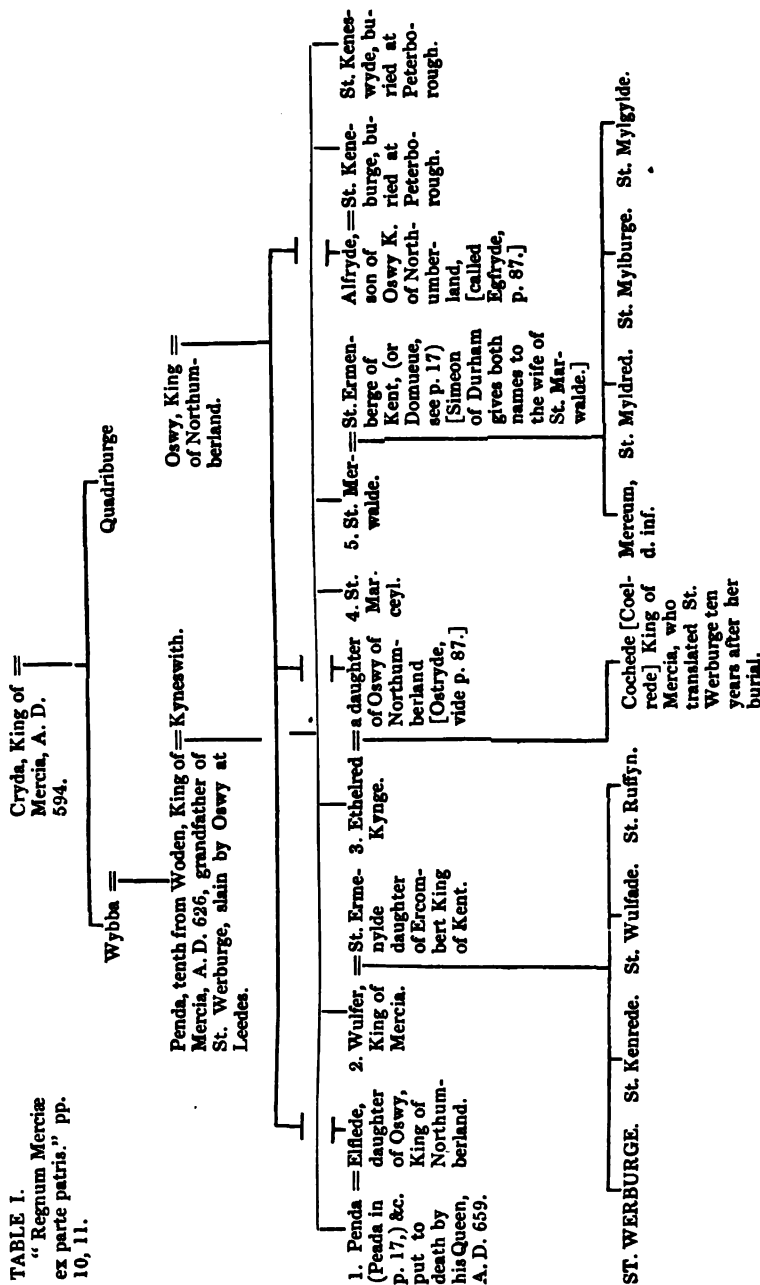
the Wood-cut repeated and reiterated at the back, and then follows the Poem, commencing with signature **a** and ending on **g iiii.**, the reverse bearing Pynson's device.

a ii	containing pages	1 to 14	k	„	„	111 to 118
b	„	15 — 22	l	„	„	119 — 134
c	„	23 — 38	m	„	„	135 — 142
d	„	39 — 46	n	„	„	143 — 158
e	„	47 — 62	o	„	„	159 — 166
f	„	63 — 70	p	„	„	167 — 182
g	„	71 — 86	q	„	„	183 — 190
h	„	87 — 94	r	„	„	191 — 206
i	„	95 — 110	s	„	„	207 — 214

A Glossary and Index are added.

The following genealogical tables are drawn up from the third chapter of the Poem, which professes to trace the descent of St. Werburge from four "Kynges of this lande, and of the riall blodde of Fraunce." Table V. has been compiled from the other four. They do not profess to be correct genealogies, nor has any attempt been made to reconcile the discrepancies which occur in various chronicles, nor even in this history. They are merely intended as aids to the reader by presenting to him, in a tabular form, that which the author gives as narrative.

TABLE I.
"Regnum Mercie
ex parte patris," pp.
10, 11.



d



TABLE IV.
"Regnum Cantiae et
Francie ex parte ma-
tris," pp. 14, 15.

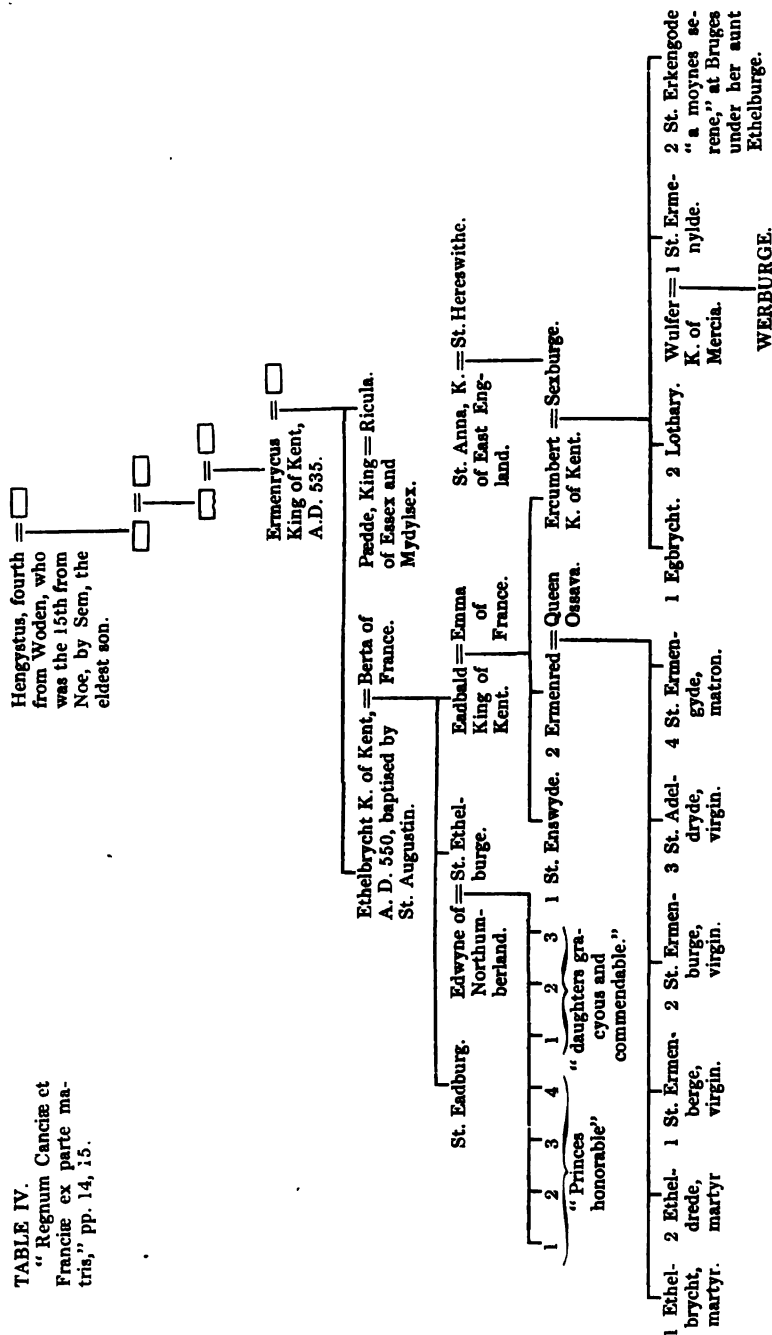
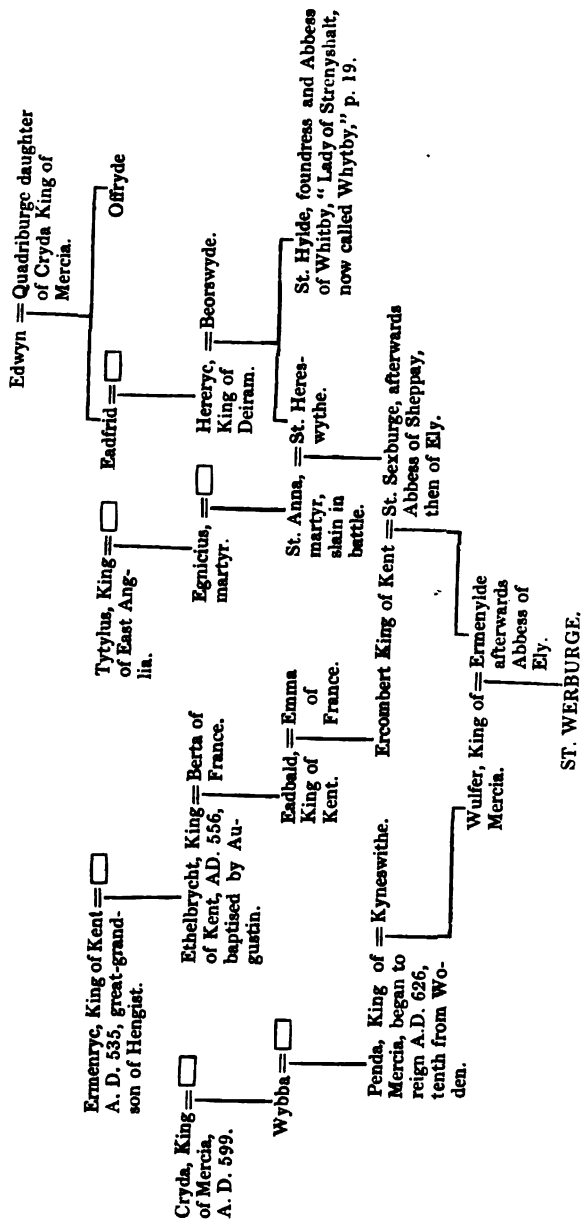


TABLE V.



**¶ Here begynneth the holy lyfe and history
of saynt werburge / very frutefull
for all christen people
to rede.**



**¶ The prologe of J.C. in the honour & laude of saint
Werburge / and to the prayse of y^r translatour
of the legende folowynge.**

Honour / ioye / and glorie / the toynes organicall
Endeles myrthes wth melodies / prayse ye all y^r princes
Nourished in bertue / intact / as pure as cristall
Relese to all synners / o werburge lady maistres
In grace thou passed / all other and in goodnes
When thou was present in this mundayne lyfe
None was the lyke / wydowe / mayde / ne wyfe

By diuine grace / to vs a ryche present
Reioyce we may / in Werburge one and all
A gemme of bertue / a virgin resplendent
Dilect of our lorde (in ioye and blis eternall
Surely she is set) to intercede and call
Her mouth nat cessyng / for them to call and crye
And in her trust / of synne to haue mercy

O good lady maistres / declpne thy syght aser
And graciously beholde / thy seruaunt chaste and pure
Henry Bradsha / sometyme monke in Chester
Whiche only for thy loue / toke the payne and labour
Thy legende to translate / he dyd his busy cure
Out of latine / in Englyshe rude ande and byle
Whiche he hath amended / with many an ornate style

Alas of Chestre / ye monkes haue lost a treasure
Henry Bradsha / the styfe of eloquence
Chestre thou may wayle / the deth of this flour

So may the citezens / alas for his absence
So may many other / for lacke of his sentence
O swete lady Werburge / an holy Abbasse glorious
Remembre Henry Bradsha / thy seruānt most gracio^s

In hym remayned no vice ne presumption
Envy and wrath / from hym were expyled
Glouth ne Venus in hym had no dominion
Avarice and glotony / he vtterly expelled
No vice in hym reigned / his felowes he excelled
As clene as cristall / he bare these vertues thre
Chastite / obidience / and wylfull pouerte

O cruell deth / whiche art the perfitte ende
Of this noble clerke / and euery mortall thyng
Agaynst the / no man may hym defende
Thou causest wo / langour / and anguissyng
And who on this / wolde haue remembryng
Howe from erth / to erth he must agayne
He wolde dispise all thynges that be mundayne. Vale.

The table of this boke.

T First the prologue of the translatour of this litell
treatyse Cap.i.

A description of the realme of merciēs of the bondes
and commodites of the same Cap.ii.

A description of the geanologie of saynt Werburge
and howe she descended of .iiii. kynges of this lāde / and
of the riall blodde of fraunce Cap.iii.

¶ ii.

¶ A playn descripcion of the actz and chivalry of kyng
Penda grauttfather to saynt Werburge / and of his no-
ble and bertuous progenie. Ca.iiii.

¶ Howe after the deth of kyng Pēda / and of his prince
Pēda his secōde son Wulfer father of saynt Werburge
was elect to be kyng of merciens. Cap.b.

¶ A lyttell descripcyon of the noble maryage bytwene
kyng Wulfer and saynt Ermenild, the kyngz daughter
of Kent / and of the solempnite done at the same season
The ixt chapitre.

¶ A breue declaracion of the holy lyfe and conuersaciō
of saynt Werburge / bled in her tender youth / aboute the
comon cours of nature. Cap.bii.

¶ Howe this yonge birgin saynt Werburge was des-
red of dukes and erles in mariage / and of the reasona-
ble answeere she gaue to them in auoydyng suche word-
ly pleasures. Cap.biii.

¶ Howe the false Wlerebode desyred Kyng Wulfer to
haue his doughter Werburge in mariage / and howe he
graunted therunto. Cap.ix.

¶ Howe the quene saynt Ermenild, wolde nat consent
thereto / & how her bretherne saynt Wulfade / and Ruffin
were agaynst the sayd mariage. Cap.x.

¶ How the false Wlerebode complaynned vpon saynt

**Wulfade & Ruffyn to kyng Wulfer/and was the cause
of their deth. Cap.xi.**

**¶ Howe kyng Wulfer was conuerted / and toke great
repentaunce for his offence . and by the counsell of saint
Ceade was a deuout man / and a good benefactour to
holy church/and founder of diuers places Cap.xii.**

**¶ Of the feruent desire & singular deuocion saynt Wer-
burge had to be religious / and of the dayly supplicaci-
ons she made to her father for the same. Cap.xiii.**

**¶ Of the reasonable & meke answere saynt Werburge
gaue to her father / whan he moued her to haue ben ma-
ried. Cap.xiiii.**

**¶ How saint Werburge was made an nōne at Ely aft-
her desire vnder saint Audri lady and abbasse. Ca.xv.**

**¶ Of the great solemnitacion kyng Wulfer made at y^r
gostly mariage of saynt Werburge his dought at Ely /
to all his louers and frendes. Cap.xvi.**

**¶ Of the holy profession and gostly cōuersacion saynt
Werburge bled at Ely i religiō vnd^r saint Audri. xvii.**

**A litell treatise of the lyfe of saynt Audrie abbasse of
Ely / & of her holy conuersacion & great deuocion which
Audrie was aunt and colyn to saynt Werburge. xviii.**

**¶ A breue reherstal of the lyfe of saint Werburge grafit
C.iii.**

moder to saint werburge / & of her comyng to Ely to her
sytt Audrie thabbasse from Shepay monasterie. c.xix.

¶ Howe saint Ermenild, after dethe of kyngc Wulfer
was made a nounge at Ely / vnder her moder Serburge
and Werburge her doughter. Cap.xx.

¶ Howe kyng Ethelrede seynge the holy conuersaciō
of Werburge his nece / made her lady and president at
Medon / Trenta / & Hambury. Also by her example and
counsel made hym a monke at Bardeney abbay. c.xxi.

¶ The holy cōuersaciō of kyng Edered brother to saynt
Werburge / & howe he refused his crowne / & was made
a monke at Rome / & there deptyd a holy cōfessour. xxii.

¶ Of the godly deuociō of saynt Werburge & bertuo
gouernans of her places / and of the great humilite she
blesd to her systers and all creatures. Ca.xxiii.

¶ Howe at Medō wilde gyse were pynned at her cōmā
dement / and also relefed & put at liberte. Ca.xxiiii.

¶ How a tyrande without pite was punysshed his face
set backward / and by his mekenes was restaured to
helth and prosperite agayne. Cap.xxv.

¶ How deuers princes folowynge sensualite entēdyng
to violate this virgine by power : by myracle were put
to confusio. Cap.xxvi.

¶ How saynt Werburge gaue knowlege to her systers

of her departure / & howe she ordred in vertue her sayd
monasteries after her departure. Cap.xxvii.

¶ Of the gostly exortaciō saint Uerburge made to her
spiters in her sekenes / and howe deuoutly she receyued
the sacramētes of holy church afoze her deth. c.xxviii.

¶ Of the departure of saynt Uerburge at Crētā into
heuen frō this miserable lyfe / & what lamētacion her sp-
iters and subiectes made for her deth. Ca.xxix.

¶ Howe the hāburgenz toke the blessed body of Uer-
burge frō Crētā by myracle & brought it to Hābury /
and of the buriall of this virgin / and manyfolde signes
shewed of god by her merites / the space of .ix. yere afoze
her translatiō. Cap.xxx.

¶ A litel breue treatise of her hole lyfe / and how for her
myacles shewed after her deth / the couent of Hamburi
purposed to trāslat her body by helpe of kyng Coelrede
reignyng in mercelande. Ca.xxxi.

¶ The solempne translatiō of this glorious virgine
saynt Uerburge . and of the great myacles done at the
same season by the might of god / and merite of this gra-
cious lady. Ca.xxxii.

¶ Howe the body of saynt Uerburge continued hole /
& substācial at Hābury after y^r trāslatiō by the space
of .CC. yeres / tyll the danes were comon to this lande /
or it fell & resoluēd was into powder. Cap.xxxiii.

**¶ Here foloweth the lyfe of the glory=
ous virgyn saynt werburge / also
many miracles that god hath
shewed for her / & fyrst the
prologe of the au=
ctour.**





¶ The prologe of the translatour of this lytell werke y^e
lyfe of saynt Werburge.



When Phebus had roſe his cours i ſagittari
And Capricorne entred a ſygne retrograt
Amyddes Decēbre / y^e ayre colde & froſty
And pale Lucyna / the erthe dyd illumynat
I roſe bp ſhortly / fro my cubycle preparat
Aboute mydnyght / and caſt in myne intent
How I myght ſpende / the tyme conuenient.

I called vnto mynde / the great buſtedfaſtneſſe
Of this wretched worlde / not by cours of nature
How there be brought / ſome men to buſynes
Oppreſſed with pouerte / langour / and dyſpleaſure
Some other exalted / to ſelycyte and pleaſure
The maker of mankynde / moſt in maieſte
Ruleth all at his wyll / it may non other be.

Beholde dyſcretly / and ſe the ſyrmament
Conſyder the ſonne / and the mone alſo
With all the planettes / and ſterres reſplendent
How they kepe theyr cours / bothe to and fro
Euer obedyent / theyr creature vnto
And byrdes beſely ſyngynge euery day
Prayſynge theyr prymate all that they may.

The iiij elementes / in lyke condycyon
The fyre / the water / the ayre / and the londe
Obſerben theyr duty / after theyr creacyon
And burum ben / and euer ſo be fonde
Thus euery creature / as we underſtonde
Werburge

a. ii.

Obeyeth to his creature / with humylyte
Except dysolute man / folowynge sensualyte.

If man wyll remembre / how he was create
To the lykenes and figure / of god almyghty
And set in paradys / a place moost delycate
To haue the fruytyon / of eternall glory /
If not synne expulsed hym / to the bale of mysery
But that he wolde enclyne / his naturall reason
To serue his maker / truely at due season.

Dyuers people / haue dyuers condicions
Comynly proued / it is euery day
Some set to vertu / and good disposicions
In penaunce / prayer / all that they may
Some in contemplacyon / the sothe to say
Some in abstinence / to chastyce the body
And make it subget / to the soule perfectly.

Some other reioyce / in synne and ydelnes
Some seruauntes to Venus / both day and nyght
Other to couetyse / and worldly besynes
Some to deceyue / by subtylte in fyght
Some vnto marchandys / a wyynyng full ryght
Some ferefull and tymorous / without audacyte
Some sadde and sobre / and of great grauyte.

Many haue pleasure to speke of rybaudry
Some of fyghtynge / braulyng / and actes marcyall
Other to flater / and paynt the company
Some to syt bytweene the cuppe and the wall
Some to blasphemie / and dyssemble withall

To backbyte and sclaūder / by malyce and enby
Some to extorcyon / theste and playne robry.

Thus after fraylte / and sundry compleccyons
Dyuers men dyuers in lyuynge there be
Dysposed by a contrary dysposycyon
Some vnto bertue / some vnto banyte
Many maners of people / now we may se
Clauerynge in the worlde / without quyetyng
As a thyp by tempest / is dryuen doubtles.

When I reuolued / with due circumstance
The dyuers maners / and mutabylte
Of worldly people / and the great varyaunce
And how this lyfe / is of no fuerthe
Now in great langour / now in prosperyte
Yet after our meryte / we shal be sure
To be rewarded / at our departure.

Chan to bertuous labours / we shulde apply
And spende not our tyme / all in ydlenes
For as a byrde is made / by nature to fly
Ryght so we shulde vse / some good busynes
To our soule helthe / with great mekenes
For tyme euyl spende in labours bayne
Is harde to be well / recouered agayne

But now syth I am / a relygyous man
For losynge of tyme / can not me excuse
Therefore I purpose / to do as I can
All suche ydlenes / whylom to refuse
With the grace of god / the tyme for to vse
Werburge.

a. iii.

Some small treatyse / to wryte breuely
To the comyn bulgares theyr mynde to satysfy.

To descrybe hys hystories / I dare not be so bolde
Syth it is a mater / for clerkes conuenient
As of the. vii. aeges / and of our parentes olde
Or of the. iiii. empyres / whylom moost excellent
Knowynge my lernynge / therto insuffycient
As for bawdy balades / ye shall haue none of me
To excyte lyght hertes / to pleasure and banpte.

But now in auoydynge / suche great folysshenes
I purpose to wryte / a legende good and true
And translate a lyfe / into Englyshe doubtles
I meane the spouse / of our lorde Ihesu
Blessed saynt Werburge / replete with vertue
A noble prynces borne / a byrgyne pure and glorious
After an holy monyall / and an abbesse gracyous.

In the abbay of Chestre / she is thryned ryche
Prynces and lady / of that holy place
The chyet protectryce / of the sayd monastery
Longe before the conquest / by deuynes grace
Protectryce of the Cytee / she is and euer was
Called specyall prymate / and pryncypall presydent
There rulyng bnder / our lorde omnyppotent.

And yf I unworthy / begynne this lytell werke
I praye all the reders / mekely of pardon
To correcke and amende / syth I am no clerke
Excuse my ignoraunce / and take the entencion
My mynde is to shewe / her lyfe and deuocyon

That euery man and woman / ensample maye take
At this pure byrgyn / synne to forsake.

And syth that she is in blysse now glorified
It were no reason / her name be had in scyence
But to the people / her name be magnified
To her laude and prayse / honour and reuerence
Her parentes and bretherne / y^e floures of experyence
Haue ben kepte in close / secrete many a day
Wherefore I purpose / somwhat of them to say.

Fyrst I entende / to make playne descripcyon
Of her fathers kyngedome the realme of Mercens
How longe it endured / under his turyon
Under how many kynges / it had prehemynens
Also of her petygre / the noble excellence
For so many sayntes / of one kynred certayne
Is harde to be founde / in all the worlde agayne.

Unto this rude werke / myne auctours these shalbe
Fyrst the true legende / and the venerable Bede
Mayster Alfrydus and Wyllyam Malysburge
Gyrarde / Polycronycon / and other mo in deed
Now glorious god / graunt me to procede
Blessed byrgyn Werburge / my holy patronesse
Helpe me to endyte / I praye the swete maystresse.

¶ A descripcyon of the realme of Mercens / of bondes
and commodytes of the same.

The yere of our Sauoure / by full cumpulacyon
foure hundred / nyne & fourty frome his natiuite
Werburge. a. iiii.

As venerable Bede / maketh declaracyon
Duke Hengyst came to this lande in great royalte
With Saxons / Angles / Jutes / thre people myghtye
Desyred by Mortygat / than kynge of Brytons
Came to defende / fro greuous oppressyons.

Also the yeres of our blessed sauyoure
Syxe hundreth foure score and nyne expresse
The Brytons were expelled / so sayth myne auctoure
From Englande to walles / with great wretchydnes
In Englande than ruled / seuen kynges doubtles
Whose names we purpose / to shewe with lycens
But pryncypally / of the kingdome of Mercyens.

The fyrst realme of Saxons / began in Kent
The yere of grace / foure hundreth fyue and fyfty
Where duke Engystus / in honour excellent
With sceptre and crowne / fyrst reygned royally
The seconde was Southsex / sayth the hystory
Where Adla and Ella / reygned full ryght
Whiche realme endured / but short tyme in myght.

The thyrde was West saxons / famous and myghty
Where fyrst reygned kynge Cerdicus
The yere of our lorde / fyue hundreth one and twenty
Whiche realme by processe / and power byctoryous
Subdued all other / to hym full memorous
The pryncypall Cytees / of his regalyte
Were in olde season / Wynchester and Salesturpe.

The fourth was Essex / where duke Erchenwyn
Fyrst reygned kynge / hauynge domynacyon

By the kyng of Merfelande / brought ofte to ruyne
The chiefe Cytee was Colchester / of his domynyon
Also of eest Englande / was the fyfth kyngdome
Where Alfa crowned / had fyrst the sufferaynte
Of Northfolke and Southfolke / knowen in certaynte.

The fyrthe was the kyngdome of Merllande
Where Cryda was crowned fyrst by auctoryte
Hauynge nyne hyres / obedyent to his hande
As after shall appere / more euydent to be
The seuenth was Northüberlande / bnder Ida & Alle
Whylom dyuyded / in sondry kyngdomes twayne
The chiefe Cytee was porke / wher y^e kyng dyd reygne.

The realme of Mercyens / by olde antyquyte
As playnly declareth / Polycronycon
Thre hundreth yeres / endured in auctoryte
Under eyghtene kynges / worthy nomynyon
Greatest of gouernaunce of all this regyon
Where Mulser reygned / a kyng byctoryous
father to saynt Werburge / byrgyn moost glorious.

The boundes and lorthyppes / of the sayd Mercyens
As shewen dyuers bokes hystoryall
Were large and myghty / and of great prehemynens
Where the sayd kyng reygned by power impervall
This realme to dyscrybe / begyn we shall
At the Cytee of Chester / and the water of Dec
Bytwene Englande and wales / of the west partye

And so transcendynge / byp towarde Shrewysbury
By the water of Sabryne / vnto Brystowe

The Est see mesureth / the Est parte truely
The water of Chamys / the south parte doth the we
flowynge into London / whoso dothe it knowe
The water of Humbre was on the north syde
With the water of Mersee / theyr landes to dryde.

Of the foresayd ryuer / and water of Mersee
The kynge of Mercyens / taketh his name
As moost sure drydent / to be had in memorye
Mesuryng and metynge / the bondes with great same
Of Mersee and Northumberlande / kynges of the same
Bitwene cheshyr and lācashyr theyr kygdomes certayne
As auneynt Cronycles describen it full playne.

The sayd myghty kyngdome / of Mercyens dyd holde
Many noble Cytees / with townes and burghes royall
Whiche Penda optayned / enlarged manyfolde
As Chester / Stafford / Lytchefelde / Couētre memorall
Lyncolne and Huntynghon / Northampton withall
Leycester and Derby / Cambrydge and Dronforde
Worcester and Brystowe / with other mo & Herforde

Many royall ryuers / were conteyned in the same
With sundry kyndes of fylthes / swete and delycious
It were teduous to thewe / of them the dryers name
In ryuers and in pooles / swymmyng full plentuous
Also forestes / parkes / chases large and beauteous
And all beestes of benery / plesaunt for a kynge
To cours at lyberte / befound there pasturynge

Also this royall realme / holdeth as we fynde
Abundaunce of fruytes / plesaunt and profytable

Great plente of cornes / and graynes of euery kynde
With hylles / bales / pastures / comly and delectable
The soyle and glebe / is set plentuous and comendable
In all pleasaunt propertes / no part of all this lande
May be compared / to this foresayd Merselande.

The people of Mercyens / the trowthe yf we dare saye
Lords / barons / knyghtes / with all the comunete
In musture and in batayle / euer the pryce haue they
The kynges grace to serue / moost balyaunt in artylere
In all actes Marcyall / euer hauryng the byctorye
With herte / mynde and harneys / redy day and nyght
Theyr enemyes to subdue / by power mayne & myght.

If they be well ordred / vnder a sure capytayne
And set to suche busynesse / theyr honour to auaunce
The triumph they optayne / knowen it is certayne
In Englade and Scotlande / & in the realme of Fraunce
Fewe of them haue cou tred / by manhode & baleaunce
Great nombre of enemyes / with knyghthode & polycy
We meane them moost specyall / in the West party.

Many other commodytes / pleasures and propriytes
This sayd realme / holdeth of olde antyquyte
In royalties and lordshippes / landes and lybertes
Honourably dylated / in worthyp and polycy
Flouryng in wysedome / honours and chyualre
Aerfeyd by kyng Offa / moost myghty and excellent
Proued in his actes / by playne experyment

This Offa subdued / in hystory as is founde
The kyng of Westsaxons / Northumberlande & Kent

Drove Brytons to wales / out of this lande
And made a depe dytche / for a sure dyuydent
Bytwene Englande and Wales / a to this day presente
Is called dytche Offa / so that no Bryton
On payne of punysshement / shulde entre this regyon.

Kyng Offa trāslated / as sayth Polycronycon
By myghty power / the see of Canterbury
Unto Lycheselde chyrche / with famous oblacyon
For euer to contynu / confirmed by auctoryte
Also he founded / saynt Albans monasterye
Fyrst of deuocyon / to Rome gaue Peter pens
Thus royall somtyme / was the realme of Mercyens.

¶ A descrypcyon of the Geanalogy of saynt Werburge
and how she descended of foure kynges of this lande / a
of the royall blode of fraunce.

¶ Regnum Merc. ex pte pris.

This noble prynces / the doughter of Syon
The floure of vertu / and byrgyn glorious
Blessed Saynt Werburge / full of deuocyon
Descended by auncetry / and tytle famous
Of foure myghty kynges / noble and byctoryous
Reynynge in this lande / by true successyon
As her lyfe hyfforyall / maketh declaracyon.

The yere of our lorde / frome the natyurte
ffye hundreth.iiii. and also.iiii. score
Whan Austyn was sende / frome saynt Gregorpe
To conuert this regyon / into our sauyoure
The noble kinge Cryda / than reigned with honoure

Upon the mercpens / whiche kyng was father
Unto kyng Wybba / and Quadenburge his syster.

This Wybba gate Penda / kyng of mercpens
Whiche Penda subdued / fyue kynges of this regyon
Reygnyng thyrty yere / in worthyp and reuerens
Was grauntfater to Werburge / by lynyall successyon
By his quene Kynestwith / had a noble generacyon
Fyue baleant prynces / Penda and kyng Wulfer /
Kyng Ethelred / saint Marceyl / saint marwalde i fere.

And two holy daughters / blessed and vertuous
Saynt Keneburge / and saynt Kenelwyde the byrgyn
Whiche ladyes were buryed / full memorous
At peturborowe abbay / and now there lye in thyrne
The sayd kyng Ethelrede / by sufferauce deuyn
Had a pryncce Cochede / whiche after reigned kyng
That traslated Werburge / the .x. yere of her buryenge.

Saynt Marwalde specyfyed / vncl to saint Werburge
By his quene saint Ermeberge a paces doughter of ket
Gate.iii. holy byrgyns / saint myldred & saint mylburge
Saynt Maygde the thyrde / of vertu equypolent
With a sone Mereum / whiche frome the holy sacramēt
Of baptysm was taken / by myracle expresse
To the blys of heuen / to regne there endelesse.

The seconde sone of Penda / we meane kyng Wulfere
A noble balvant prync / by lynyall dyscent
Reygnyng vpon the Mercpens with royalte & power
Maried saynt Ermenylde / y^r kynges doughter of kent
Where throughe the grace of god omnympotent

They had sayre yssue / saynt Werburge / saynt Kenrede
Saynt wulfade / saynt Ruffyn / in story as we rede.

¶ Regnum Norththorowum /
Ex parte matris.

The secōde realme of whō saynt Werburge dyd descēde
Was of saynt Edwyn / kyng of Northumberlande
Whiche maryed Quadryburge / his ryghtes to defende
Doughter of Cryda / kyng of Merlande
Bytwene them descended / as we vnderstande
Two comly prynces / the fyrst we call Eadryde
The secōde sone in batayle slayne was named Offryde

Kyng Eadryde gate Hererc y^e was kyng of Deiram
This Hererc by Beotwyde his quene sayre & he
Had saynt Hylde the abbesse / saynt Bede sayth y^e same
Lady also foundresse / of the abbay of Wythbye
This sayd kyng Hererc / had another lady
The quene of east Englade / saynt Herst with the hyght
Mother to saynt Serburge / & thre other ladies byght.

This holy Serburge / full of grace and goodnes
Was maryed to Ercombert / a noble kyng of Kent
Bytwyr them descended / a precyous ryches
The blesyd Ermenylde / humble and pacient
Whiche for her vertue / was maryed full excellent
To Wulfer kyng of Merciens / with great solemnyte
And mother was to Werburge / a swete floure of chastite

¶ Regnum Estanglorum /
ex parte matris.

The thynde noble kyngedome / of her parentage
Was the realme of eest England / whylom i great degre
Cytillus kyng of the same / byctoryous and sage
Gat Redwald his fyrst sone / a chrysten prynce was he
This Redwalde had.ii. sones / flouryng in chyualye
The fyrst was Kenulherus / a noble man of fame
The seconde Corpwaldus / called by his name.

This foresayd kyng Cytillus / had a seconde sone
Called Egnicius / accepted as a martyre
Whiche sayd Egnicius / by lynyall progressyon
Had.iii. noble prynces / that worthy euer were
The fyrst was called Ethelwod / y^e seconde Adelhere
The thynde was saynt Anna / a kyng moost vertuous
In batayle slayne vnrighfully / now a martyr glorio^{us}

This forsayd kyng Anna / maryed as we rede
The holy prynces Herewith / for loue and amyte
They had a noble ysse / to encrease theyr mede
The blessed Serburge / saynt Audy of Elye
Saynt Ethelburge the thyrd / in Byrges now lyeth she
Saynt Withburge the.iiii. y^e martyr saynt Iurwyne
And Abdulph after kyng / which regned a lōge tyme.

The lady saynt Serburge / eldest of them all
A gracypus matrone / enduryng all her lyfe
Was maryed to Ercombert / y^e kyng of Kent royall
They brought fourth a progeny / noble to dyscryue
The blessed Ermenylde / vertuous mayd and wyfe
Whiche lady was mother / by grace of god almyght
Unto blessed Werburge / our confort and our lyght.

¶ Regnum Cantie et francie / ex parte matris.

**The.iiii. myghti kyngdome / of whom this royal pices
Saynt Werburge descended / was the realme of kent
Where reigned fyrst Hengystus / by byctory & prowes
Whiche was the fourth man / by lygnage euident
Procedynge fro Woden / a prynce full prepotent
Of whom our pgenytours / Angles / Jutes / & Saxons
Lynpally succeded / kynges of dyuers nacyns.**

**This foresayd prynce Wode / as dyuers auctours sayne
Was the.xv. fro Noe / by naturall progressyon
Of his eldest sone Sem / descendynge playne
In saxons tongue Geaf / after ryte and custome
Not of the lygne of Japhet / by theyr oppnyon
Retourne we to Hengyst / and to his successoures
And speke of theyr royalte / to please the audytoures.**

**Ermenrycus kyng of kent / reigned with great power
The yere of our sauoure / fyue hundreth fyue & thyrte
Unto whome Engystus was great graundfather
This sayd kyng Ermenryc / had yllue saye and fre
A doughter called Ricula / which & married was to fledde
Of Ester and Aldylter / gouernoure and kyng
Of whom a myghty kynred / by proces was comynge.**

**This Ermenryc gate Ethelbryt full bertuous
Whiche kyng reigned in kent / the yere of our sauour
Fyue hundreth fyue & fyfty / & baptised was gracyous
By blessed byshop Austyn / of Englade called doctour
He was fyrst crysten kyng / & pryncypall protectour
Of the fayth within this lande / and founder was also**

Of dyuers holy places / and monasteryes both to w.

**This sayd kynge Ethelbryt / for the great habundaunce
Of ryches and honour / was maryed solemply
To the prynces Berta / the kynges doughter of fraunce
And of them proceded a bertuous progeny
Cadburg & Ethelburg saintes / whiche Ethelburg truly
By Edwyne kyng of North / had.iiii. pices honorable
And.iii. holy doughters / gracious and commendable.**

**Also kynge Ethelbryt / had to his successoure
Kynge Cadwalde / in Kent reygnyng a longe space
He maryed lady Emma / of fraunce the chosen floure
And by her had yssue / saynt Engwyde full of grace
Also prynce Ermened his seconde sone / whiche wace
Maryed to quene Osaua / of them dyd procede
Two holy martyrs / Ethelbryt and Etheldrede.**

**This prynce Ermened / had.iiii. ladyes bryght
Lyke the.iiii. floodes of Paradyse / chynnyng in vertu
The eldest of the systers / saynt Ermenberge bryght
The seconde saynt Ermenburge / the spouses of Jhesu
The thyrde saynt Adeldryde / all byces dyd subdu
The.iiii. saynt Erme gyde / sayth they lyues hystorvall
Thre of them holy byrgyns / the fourth matrone we call**

**This foresayd Cadwalde / a souerayne myghty kynge
By Emma of fraunce / had to his enherytoure
The noble kynge Ercumbert / full gracious in luyng
Whiche maryed Serburge / with worshyp & honour
The kynges doughter of eest England specyfied afore
This prynce loued vertue / prayer and deuocyon
Merburge
b i.**

Commaūdyng all his realme / to kepe þe fast of Lenton.

Ercombert. xxx. yere / regnyng in his regaly
Had a noble progeny / in grace and all goodnes
His prynce hyght Egbryt / his seconde sone Lothary
Whiche prynce reygned but ten yere / kyng expresse
Lothary succeded hym / raynyng. xii. yeres doubtesse
Also he had two daughters / saynt Ermenylde þe quene
The other hyght saynt Erkenode / a moynes serene.

This lady Ermenylde / was mayed royally
To the aforesayd Aulfer / kyng of Mercens
Bytweene them descended / full graciously
A noble Margaryte / of hie magnyfyens
A roole of Paradyse / full of prehemynens
Most blessed Werburge / the gemme of holynes
Our synguler suffrage / and sterre of our clerenes.

¶ A descrypcyon of the actes & chyualry of kyng Penda
da graundfather to saynt Werburge / & of his noble and
vertuous yllue and progenye. Ca. iiii.

The yere of grace. bi. c. fyre and twenty
The foresayd prynce Penda / began for to regne
The tenth man frō Woden / a prynce in Saxony
Sone and heyre to Wybbe / sayth myne auctour playne
Fyfty yeres of aye / that tyme he was certayne
Whan he was fyrst crowned / kyng of Mercens
Thyrt yeres he reygned / with great reuerens.

fyue kynges in batayle / this Penda dyd subdue
Saintes Edwyn & Oswald / kynges of Northūberlāde

With Sygebert / Egnycius / and Anna full of vertu
Thre noble kynges / regnyng in eest Englande
With helpe of Brytones / by Bede we vnderstande
Dylated his regyon / with worshyp and honoures
Muche more than dyd / any of his predecessoures.

He maryed Keneswith / a lady fayre and byght
And by her had yssue / a goodly generacyon
Peada his prynce / Ulfer a noble knyght
Saynt Ethelred / and Aferwalde full of deuocyon
Also saynt Aferseleyn / of holy conuersacyon
Saynt Keneburge / also saynt Keneswyde
Auntes to saynt Werburge / upon the fathers syde.

Thre of his chyldren / as we vnderstande
Prynce Peada / Kyneburge / and Ethelrede
He maryed with Oswy / kynge of Northumberlande
Co. iii. of his yssue / for loue and for mede
Ulfer and Aferwalde / the story sayth in dede
Were maryed vnto / the royall blode of Kent
To Ermenylde and Domueue / two ladyes excellent.

Soone after by grace / the myddyll parte of Mercens
Under prynce Peada / were baptysed euery chone
Whiche Peada maryed / Elde with reuerens
Doughter vnto Oswy / kynge of the North regyon
Peada therto graunted / without contradyccyon
Under a fre lycence / his people were at lyberte
Within all his regyon / baptysed for to be.

Also prynce Alfryde / sone to kynge Oswy
Maryed saynt Keneburge / syster to prynce Peada
Werburge
b. ii.

Whiche sayd Beda / brought from the north party
foure holy preestes / Ced / Beccy / and Adda
To preche to his people / the fourth was Wynna
Whiche .iiii. seldom sealed / day / nyght nor tyme
To conuert the people / into chrystes doctryne.

Kynge Beda consented / as afore is sayd
And permytted doctours / to preche in euery place
Thurghout his realme / and neuer it denyed
To baptise his subgettes / by sayth and ghosly grace
He ayded them with socour / and helpe in that case
That wolde be conuerted / for theyr synguler mede
As sayth myne auctour / the venerable Bede.

But by the temptacyon / of our ghosly enemy
This sayd kynge Beda / this byctoryous knyght
Of balpaunt men in armure / rayled a great company
And to the North parties went / purpolsynge to fyght
And cruelly to see / by power / mayne / and myght
The foresaid kynge Oswy / as he afore had slayne
Sayt Oswalde his brother / kynge and martyr playne.

Shortly was forgotten / the fauour of his affynyte
That fully was cōtracte / bytwene these kynges twayne
Joynd at the maryages / of theyr chyldren thre
Euer to habe endured / in loue by reason playne
yet Oswy offered Beda / many ryche gyftes certayne
To auoyde his malyce / and for to kepe the peas
Whiche Beda refused / replete with wychednes.

Bytwene these .ii. kynges / was a ströge myghty batell
Not ferre from yorke / ny the flood of Wynwed

In the regyon of Leedes / where by fortune cruell
kyng Penda perished / & carefully was leed
And .xxx. dukes with hym / were slayne and leste deed
The kyng Oswy offered gladly / with good entent
His yonge doughter Edelred / to god omnyotent.

He set her for doctryne / to the abbess saynt Hylde
Lady of Strengthalt / now called Wythby
And gaue .xii. possessyons / a monastery to buyde
Whiche place is from yorke / myles thyrty
He gaue great landes / to his sone in la'we Peade
But the thyrde yere after / this sayd pryncce was slayne
By treason of his wyfe Elfede / for certayne.

¶ How after dethe of Penda & his sone pryncce Peada
his seconde sone Tulfur / father to saynt Werburge was
electe to be kyng of all the Mercyens. Ca.b.

After that this Penda / of Mercyens kyng
In batayle by kyng Oswy / cruelly was slayne
And his pryncce Peada / after hym thre yeres reygnyng
Was put into deeth / by his quene in certayne
These people of Mercyens / rebelled sore agayne
The foresayd Oswy / kyng of Northumberlande
And hym refused / as ye shall vnderstande.

All the sayd Mercyens / by a generall counsell
fortyfied themselfe / with power myght and reason
And crowned pryncce Tulfur / as Bede doth vs tell
with honour / worshyp / and greate renowne
Whiche pryncce to kyng Penda / was the seconde sone
This pryncce was preserued / afore tyme secretly
Werburge b.iii.

And saued by his subiectes frome dethe and malady.

This valyaunt prynce / and redoubted knyght
Kynge Aulfer thus crowned / with great prosperyte
Upon the Mercyens reigned / by tyle and myght
Whiche realme was dyryded / whylom in partes thre
Fyrst in the West Marches / & in the South parte truely
The thyrde parte was nomynate / mydle Englonde
Duer them all thre / he reygued as is sonde.

This sayd kynge Aulfer / in honour famous
Was deuoutely baptysed / with great solempnyte
By two holy bysshops / the blessed Finamus
And bysshop Jerumannus / saythe the bystoye
The kynge made a bowe / of hys auctoryte
All temples of ydols / within his regyon
To destroy and chaunge / vnto chrysten relygion.

This Aulfer was polytyke / replete with wysdom
Victoryous in batayle / proued by his chyualry
His enemyes oppressed / by manhode and reason
Subdued his aduersaries / and had the victory
From his realme expelled / all cruell tyranny
Conquered in batayle / at Aldum ryght famous
The kynge of West Saxons / called Kenwalcus.

Also he subdued / vnto his Empyre
The Ilande Vecta / called the yle of wyght
And after that he had / of it his desyre
He gaue the sayd yle / by tyle full ryght
To the kynge of east Englande / to enlarge his myght
Under that condycyon / that he baptysed wolde be.

And was his godfather / of pure charyte

In lykewyle as this prouynce / of Mercens
Whylom was greatest realme / within Englande
Many yeres contynuyng in prehemynēs
Ryght so the spyrytualte / well knowne and founde
How fyue bysshop sees / within this sayd Mercelande
As at Chester / at Lychefelde / also at Worcester
The fourth at Lyncolne / the fyfth at Dorchester.

Forthermore after dethe / of Ierumannus
Bysshop of Lychefelde / Aulfer the sayd kyng
Desyred the archebysshop / and prymate Theodorus
To graunt them a bysshop / of holy luyng
To gouerne the people / by spyrytuall techyng
To shewe to his subiectes / the ensample of vertu
And to preche and teche / the sayth of Chryst Ihesu

This holy archebysshop / and prymate Theodorus
Desyred saynt Cedda / of the kyng Oswy
For his perfeccyon / and luyng vertuous
To be remoewed / to the prouyce of Mercy
Kyng Aulfer was gladde / of his comyng truly
Ryght so were all / the people of his realme
Thankyng therfore / the kyng of Jerusalem.

Kyng Aulfer graunted / to saynt Cedda the cōfessoure
Chan bysshop of Lychefelde / moche possessyon
To edify chyrches / vnto chrystes honoure
But namely he gaue a certayne mansyon
In the prouynce of Lyndesy / ny vnto Lyncolne
Suffycient to susteyne / and well for to content

fifty seruantes / of good relygious obeyent.

**This noble sayd prynce / and redoubted souerayne
flouryng in manheed / wysedome and polycy
Excelled the peres / of this realme certayne
In person / fortitude / and proued chyualry
Lyberall to his seruantes / gentyll in company
Gracyous to the poore / and a sure protectour
A founder of chyrches / and a good benefactour.**

**¶ A lytell descrypcyon of the noble maryage bytwene
Kynge Gulfer & saynt Ermenylde y^e kynges daughter
of Kent / & of the solēpryde done at y^e same season. Ca. vi.**

I**n meane whyle the kynge / mynded maryage
By the sufferaunce of our lord god omnyppotent
Issue to encrease / acordynge to his lygnage
After hym to succede / kynge and presydent
He mynded moost / the kynges daughter of Kent
Prynces Ermenylde / nomynate she was
A beaufull creature / replete with great grace.**

**Certaynly her father / was called Ercomberte
As afore is specyfied / the kynge of Kent
Her mother Serburye / humble in her herte
Of whome Ermenylde / a lady excellent
Lynally descended / by tytle full auncyent
Her graundfather / Edbalde kynge Ethelhyrces sone
The fyrst crysten prynce / of Saxons nacyon.**

**Of foure myghty kyngdomes / she is descended
From the royall blode of Fraunce / also of Kent**

Upon her fathers party / as afore is notyfed
And on her mothers fyde / by lyne aunceint
Frome the east Englande / famous and excellent
Also of Northumberlande / flouryng in honour
Conuerted and baptyfed / vnto our saupour.

This sayd Ermenylde / this floure of vertue
Was euer dysposed / from her natyuite
Vnto the dyscyplne / of our lorde Ihesu
Enspred with his grace / and benygnyte
Refused this worlde / ryches and vanyte
He bled the maners / of sadde dyspofcyon
Passyng fragyll youth / and naturall reason.

Suche synguler confort / of bertuous doctryne
In her to dyd water / a pure perfyte plante
Whiche dayly encreased / by sufferaunce deuyne
Afterueploufly growyng / in her freshe and barnaunt
With dyuers propyrtes / of grace exuberant
As sobrynes / dyscrecyon / and mekenesse bygynall
Obedyence / graunte / and wysedome naturall.

Every tree or plante / is proued euident
Whether good or euyl / by experyence full sure
By the budde and fruyte / and pleasaunt descent
As swete tree byngeth forth / by cours of nature
Swete fruyte and delycious / in tast and verdure
Ryght so Ercombert / by his quene moost mylde
Brought graciously forth / the swete Ermenylde.

She folowed her father / in worshyp and honoure
As her mother Serburge / she toke imytacyon
Serburge c.i.

To lyue in clemmes / presentynge in behaupour
Her father in power / her mother in relyggon
Humble in herte / haupnge compassyon
Pyteous and lyberall / where was necessyte
Joyfull to obserue / the dedes of charyte.

Forther of her lyfe / to make declaracyon
As the true legende playnly dothe expresse
Consyder the hystory / with good inspeccyon
Of blessed Serburge / that noble pryncesse
The sayd conuersacyon / and ghostly swetenesse
That is perceyued / in her holy mother
The same perfeccyon / was in the other.

Neuerthelesse Ermenylde / escape ne myght
Worldely honours / ano secular dygnyte
As requyred so noble a state of ryght
Ryches / possessyon / namely her beauty
But vnto maryage / compelled was she
Of her parentes / contrary to her entent
To whome she was founde / euer obedyent.

This noble lady / by deuynne prouydens
Elected to her / a spouse commendable
A balvaunt prynce / the kynges sone of Mercyens
Called kyng Gulfer / famous and honorable
Reygnyng in Mercelande / with ioy incomparable
Excellynge many other / prynces of this regyon
In ryches / retynu / fortune / honour / and wyldome

At this maryage / was moche solempnyte
Her father Ercomberte / and her frendes all

Tho pynces her vnclcs / Egbyct and Lothary
The kyng of east Englande / Aldulph in speycall
Dukes / erles / barons / and knyghtes in generall
Whiche sayd company / were redy that same day
To worshyp the matrymony / in theyr beest aray.

This royall maryage / was solemnyfied
With synguler pleasures / ryches and royalte
Theyr frendes colyns / redy on euery syde
To do theyr deuoyre / and shewe humanyte
Nothyng wantynge / euery thyng was plente
Of delycate metes / and myghty wynes stronge
With mynstrels / melody / and myrthes amonge.

When this saye pynces / resplendent in vertue
Came vnto Mercelande / in the order of matrymony
Than grace with good gouernaunce / dyd byrte subdue
Vertue was maystres / chiefe ruler and lady
The faythe of holy chyrche / dyd growe and multiply
Relygion encreased / honour and prosperyte
In euery place pacynce / true loue and charyte.

At the solempne spousage / of this lady bryght
Kynge Aulfer promysed / on his fydelyte
Errours to correcke / by his wysdome and myght
Clere to expell / all sectes of ydolatre
Frome his realme / and fulfill by his auctoryte
The promysse truely made / at the fonte of baptyme
The chyrche to conserue / and saue it from ruyne.

The myghty realme of Mercens / also of Kent
That season were brought / bothe vnto nyte
Merburge c.ii.

And as one kyngedome / ruled full excellent
They subiectes and seruauntes / in tranquyllyte
Kyng Aulfer by his quene / had a noble progenye
Aulfade and Ruffyn / with prynce Kenrede
And Werburge / of whome we purpose to procede.

CA breue declaracyon of the holy lyfe and conuersacy-
on of saynt Werburge / bled in her tender youthe / aboue
the comyn cours of nature. Ca. vii.

THis blessed lady / and royall prynces
Descendynge of noble / and hye parentage
Was doughter to Aulfer / the legende dothe rehers
Kyng of Mercelande / and of famous lynage
Her mother Ermenylde / ioynded to hym in maryage
They dwelled somtyme / a lytell frome Stone
At a place in Staffordeshyre / amydde his regyon.

They had bytweene them / other chyldren thre
Aulfade and Ruffyn / martyrs full glorious
Synt Kenrede his prynce / of greate auctoryte
Cumplate at Rome / a confessor gracypous
The lyues of these thre / we wyl not now dyscus
But speke of the ghostly / and meke conuersacyon
Of blessed Werburge / now at this season.

For as declareth / the true Passyonary
A boke wherin / her holy lyfe wyten is
Whiche boke remayneth / in Chester monastery
I purpose by helpe / of Ihesu kyng of blys
In any wyse to reherse / any sentence amys

But folowe the legende / and true hyffory
After an humble ffyle / and from it lytell bary.

This blessed Werburge / from her natyryte
ffolowyng the counfeyll / of her noble parentes
Dyfpofed her felfe / euer to humplyte
Obedyent to them / with all reuerens
Loth to dyspleafe / or make any offens
Or dyslquet any reasonable creature
Thus was her maner / in youthe be ye fure.

Sadde and demure / of her countenaunce
Stable in geffure / proued in euery place
Sobye of her wordes / all vertu to auauunce
Humble / meke / and mylde / replete with grace
Many vertuouf maners / in her founde there was
And dyuers gyfftes naturall / to her appropriate
As was conuenyent / for fo noble a ffate.

And as fhe encreafed / moore and moze in age
A newe plant of goodnes / in her dayly dyd fpryng
Great grace and vertu / were fet in her ymage
Wherof her father / had moche merueyllyng
Her mother mused / of this ghoffly thyng
To behold fo yonge / and tender a may
From vertu to vertu / to procede euery day.

No merueyll it is / who fo taketh hede
In naturall thynges / the dyuers operacyon
Dothe not a royall rofe / from a here procede
Paffyng the ffloke / with pleafaunt dylectacyon
The ffweete ryuer paffeth / by due probacyon
Werburge c.iii.

His heed and fountayne / ryght so dothe she
Transcende her parentes / with great benygnyte.

And tho her bretherne / delyted for to here
For theyr soule helthe / ghostly exortacyon
yet she them passed / manyfolde more clere
In loue of our lorde / and meke conuersacyon
And lyke as Phebus / in his heuently regyon
Passed other stretes / shynynge moost pure
So dothe this byrgyn / aboute the cours of nature.

Lordes / dukes / barons / within the kynges hall
Aerueyled on her maners / and constaunte sobrynes
The plente of wysedome / and dyscrecyon withall
In so tender age / they neuer knewe expresse
Her mynde so perfyte / auoydynge all ylnes
But they knewe well / it pretended by all reasone
Synguler grace and goodnes / to her comynge soone.

Affyrmynge on this wyse / yf she wolde contynu
With suche vertuous maner / in yeres of hye dyscrecyon
That she sholde do honour / by the grace of Ihesu
Unto all her kynrede / and synguler consolacyon
An ensample of vertu / and humylyacyon
Theyr conforste / theyr tresure / and sterre full bryght
And chefe lumynary / shynynge day and nyght.

Fyrst in the mornynge / to chyrche she wolde go
Folowynge her mother / the quene euery day
With her boke and bedes / and departe not them fro
Here all deuynne scrupce / and her deuocyns say
And to our blessed saupour / mekely on knees pray

Dayly hym desyringe / for his endeles grace and pyte
To kepe her frome synne / and preserue her in chastyte.

Where youthe is dysposed / of naturall mocyon
To dysportes and pleasures / full of banyte
This mayde was euer / of sadde dyspolycyon
Constaunt and dyscrete / styl and womanle
Gladde in her soule / to here speke of chastyte
Clenes and sobrenes / and ioyfull for to here
Ghostly exortacyons / to her herte moost dere.

¶ How this yonge byrgyn saynt Werburge was desy-
red of dukes & erles in maryage / and of the answere she
gaue to the / in auoydenge worldly pleasures. Ca.viii.

As tender youthe passed / this blessed maydyn
Dayly encreased / more and more in vertue
In ghostly scyence / and bertuous dyscyplyne
Oblerynge the doctryne / of our lorde Ihesu
Had his commaundmentes / in her herte full tru
So that no creature / more perfyte myght be
In bertuous gyftes (by grace) than she.

She was replete / with gyftes naturall
Her bylage moost pleasaunt / fayre and ampyable
Her goodly eyes / clerer than the crystall
Her countenaunce comly / swete and commendable
Her herte lyberall / her gesture fauourable
She lytell consyderynge / these gyftes transytory
Set her selcyte / in chryst perpetuall

She hadde moche worthyp / welthe / and ryches
Werburge c.iiii.

Cestures / honoures / reuerence and royalte
The ryches she dysposed / with great mekenesse
To the poore people / with great charyte
But her sadnes / constaunce / and humylyte
Vertue / gentylnes / so pacyent and colde
Transcended all these other / a thousande folde.

The vertuous maners / and excellent fame
Of this holy byrgyn / redoubted so ferre
In all this regyon / in praylynge her name
That the nobles of this lande / wolde not dysferre
But with ryche apparell / and myghty power
Came for to seke her / lyke as to Salomon
Quene Saba appoched / to here of his wysedome.

So lyke wyse some came / to her of her vertue
Some of her sadnesse / and prudent dyscrecyon
Some for her constaunce / so stable and true
Some of her chastyte / and prenaunt reason
Some for her beaute / and famous wysdome
And some that were bozne / of kynges lygnage
Desyred yf they myght / haue her in maryage.

In beaute ampyable / she was equall to Rachell
Comparable to Sara / in fyne fydelyte
In sadnes and wysedom / lyke to Abygaell
Replete as Delbora / with grace of prophesy
Equyvalent to Ruth / she was in humylyte
In pulchrytude Rebecca / lyke Hester in holynesse
Lyke Judyth in vertue / and proued holynesse.

The prynce of Messarons / a pere of this lande

Wyllynge to haue her by way of maryage
With humble reuerence / as we vnderstande
Sayd to her these wordes / wysely and sage
O souerayne lady / borne of hys lynage
O beautefull creature / and imperpall prynces
This is my full mynde / that I now rehers.

from my fathers realme / hyder I am come
Unto our presence / yf ye be so content
With worshyp and honour / and moche renowne
In all honest maner / aperyng euydent
My mynde is on you set / with loue feruent
To haue you in maryage / all other to forsake
If it be your pleasure / thus me for to take.

ye shalbe asured / a quene for to be
ye shall haue ryches / worshyp / and honour
Royall ryche appareyll / and eke the sufferaynte
Precyous stones in golde / worthy a kynges tresour
Landes / rentes / and lyberteies / all at your pleasur
Seruauntes euery houre / your byddyng for to do
With ladyes in your chambre / to wayte on you also.

With these kynde wordes / the byrgyn abashed fore
And with mylde countenaunce / answered hym agayne
The playnes of her mynde / to rest for euermore
Sayenge : o noble pryncce / I thanke you now certayne
for youre gentyll offer / shewed to me so playne
ye be well worthy / for your regalyte
To haue a better maryage / an hundredth folde than me.

But now I shewe you / playnly my true mynde

My purpose was neuer / marved for to be
A lorde I haue chosen / redemer of mankynde
Ihesu the seconde persone in trynitye
To be my spouse / to Whome my byrgynye
I haue depely bowed / endurynge all my lyfe
His seruauit to be / true spouses and wyfe.

Therefore noble prynce / hertfully I you pray
Tempte me no farther / after suche condycyon
Whiche am so stedfast / and wyll be nyght and day
Neuer for to chaunge / nor make alteracyon
Take ye this answer / for a sure conclusyon
The promyse I haue made / and bove of chastyte
Endurynge my lyfe / shall neuer broken be.

Dyuers other astatys / came her for to assaile
Made instaunt requestes / vnto this byrgyn fre
For all theyr busynesse / they myght not preuaile
So constaunt fyrmes & stable / in herte & mynde was she
A mountayne or hyll / soner leue ye me
Myght be remooued / agaynst the course of nature
Than she for to graunte / to suche worldly pleasure.

She well consydered / the texte of holy scripture
Who byleueth her chaste / for the loue of Ihesu
The temple of god / they be clypped sure
And shalbe rewarded / for that noble vertu
An hundredth folde (by grace) byces to subdu
And heuen for to haue / at theyr departynge
Whiche she remembered wysely / aboue all thyng.

¶ How y^e false Werhode desyred kynge Aulser to haue

Merburge his daughter in maryage. And how y^r kynge
graunted therto. Ca. ix.

As afore is sayd / whan Penda the kynge
By saynt Oswy kynge / at Leedes was slayne
And Aulfer his sone / the fourth yere folowynge
Was baptysed and crowned / By bysshop Synane
A solempne boue he made / saythfull and certayne
All temples of ydolles / in his realme to destroy
And chaunge them to chyrches / and newe edify.

The same he promysed / as he was true knyght
Whan that he maried / blessed Ermenylde
Bredynge sore the iustyce / of god almyght
For his fathers demerytes / unreconsyded
On hym to fall sodeynly / and so he begged
Promysynge amendes / at his conuersyon
Unto holy chyrche / with humble deuocyon.

Whiche kynge Aulfer / as was the more pyte
By the wycked counseyll / of a fals knyght
Called Merbode / ranne soone in apostasy
For a lytell whyle / wantynge perfyte lyght
The bryghtnes of the day / was tourned to nyght
Whan he gaue credence / that creature vnto
Prolongynge the actes / he promysed to do.

Under kynge Aulfer / chese steward of his hall
Was this false Merbode / ruler of every porte
Whome the lady Venus / brought vnto thall
Perled and wounded / so greuously his harte
Enflammed with loue / and with her fyy darte

Plonget with sorowe / syghynge day and nyght
The beaute of Werburge / moeued so his syght.

The blynde goddes Cupyde / bexed so sore his mynde
With interpor loue / and sensuall desyre
Of worldely affectyon / that reste coude he none fynde
His spyryte was troubled / he brenned as dothe the fyre
Upon this holy byrgyn / his loue was so entyre
To haue her in maryage / was all his intent
That euery houre was a moneth / after his iudgement.

Prouyded in his mynde / how that he well myght
Enforce hym wysely / with boldynesse and polycye
To shewe his full entent / in maner good and ryght
No dyspleasure taken / vpon his lordes partye
By this ymagynacyon / he fell vpon his knee
Afore his lorde and kynge / desyrynge a petycyon
His mynde to declare / with fully grace of pardon.

Excellent prynce he sayd / and moost worthy kynge
That reygnes now within the realme of Englande
Flourynge in chualry / in honour encreasynge
Trāscendynge other prynces / of this forsayd lande
My full intencion / now ye shall vnderstande
Requyrynge your grace / in this poore cyrcumstaunce
At my petycyon / to take no greuaunce.

My synguler good lorde / hertfully I you pray
With instaunte request / and humble supplicacyon
Graunte me your doughter Werburge / as ye maye
To haue her in maryage / auoydynge all treason
If your grace deny / this present petycyon

Wethe me behoues / full soone and hastely
My loue is so feruent / there is no remedy.

Stande by Werbode / kynge Gulfer than sayd
Our chyfe champpon / in all our chyualry
your humble desyre / shall not be denyd
Of Werburge our doughter / now consent wyll we
If ye may optayne / her wyll and mynde truele
Her mothers also / vnder that condycyon
We graunt her to you / at your meke suggestyon.

Of this gracyous answere / a gladd man he was
Reioysynge in his herte / began to conspyre
Castynge in his mynde / craftely by compas
How he myght optayne / to the hye empyre
And regne after Gulfer / at his owne desyre
But tho man prepose / god dysposed all
Who clymbeth to hye / often hath a fall.

¶ How the quene saynt Ermenylde wolde not cōsente
thereto / & how her bretherne saynt Wulfade and Ruffyn
were agaynst the sayd maryage. Ca. x.

¶ Of this busynesse / whan the quene had knowlege
Namely of Werbode / the greuous presumpcyon
How he had moeued / thought his wyched rage
The kynge in suche causes / by synghuler petcyon
And how the kynge consented / to his supplicacyon
She was sore greued / at this proude crafty knyght
Called hym in presence / and sayd these wordes ryght.

Thou wyched tyrant / and unkynde creature

folowyng thyne appetyte / and sensualyte
Thou cruell pagane / presumyng at thy pleasure
Bynded with ygnorance / and infydelyte
Who gaue the lycence / and suche auctoryte
Our doughter Werburge / to desyre of the kynge
Without our counseyll / therto consentynge.

Consyder ryght well / thy kynred and pedegre
It is well known / thou arte comen of nought
Nothor of duke / erle / lorde / by auncetre
But of bylayne people / yf it be well sought
Agaynst our honour / now that thou haste wrought
Whiche consequently / shall be to thy payne
For all thy labour / is spende in bayne.

Thou knowes of a certayne / refused the hase
Many a ryche maryage / within this londe
A thousande tymes better / than euer thou wase
Is now or els shalbe / by any maner sonde
Our doughter to the / shall neuer be bonde
Nor suche a caytyfe / shall haue no powere
With kynges blode royall / to approche it nere.

Under my souerayne lorde / and me also
An offycer thou arte / and of great royalte
To be a true seruaunte / now thou arte our foo
Cryed / proued / founde fals / in eche degre
Thou haste well deserued / to be hanged on a tre
For thy mysdede / thou shall scone repent
Thy hye presumpcyon / proude and dyslobedpent.

As for our doughter / and dere derlyng

By the grace of god / and our aduryement
Soone shalbe maryed / to the moost myghty kyng
That euer was borne / and in this erth lent
We meane our saupour / lorde omnyppotent
Wherefore thy wretchydnes / wyll bpon the lyght
Thou taynted traytour / out of our syght.

With that saynt Werburge / came into presence
Afore her mother / and all the company
Doyng her duty / with all due reuerenc
Folowyng her doctryne / full sapiently
With lycence obtayned / spake euidently
After suche maner / that all the audyence
Reioysed to here / her lusty eloquence

O souerayne lady / and kynges doughter dere
My dere mother / ouer all thyng transytory
O gracious prynces / and quene to kynge Gylfere
To pour ghostly counseyll / do me euer apply
As I haue promysed / ryght euidently
To the kyng of kynges / and lorde celestyall
I wyll obserue / enduryng this lyfe mortall.

And thou false Werhode / folowyng sensualyte
I meruayle greatly / thy hye presumpcyon
To moeue our father / with suche audacyte
Knowyng my mynde / set on relygyon
yet for thy soule helthe / accepte this lesson
Aske mercy and grace / of my spouse eternall
Lest vengeaunce sodeynly / vpon the do fall.

Wherwith her bretherne / Gylfade and Ruffyn

Two noble pynces / manfull sadde and wyse
Sore bered with payne / they hertes were within
At this false stewart / whiche can so deuyse
Agayne they honour / to do suche preiudyse
As to attempte they father the kynge
In so great a mater / they not consentynge.

They called Werbode / afore them all
Sayenge thou caytife / who gaue the lycence
To moeue this cause / so hy and specyall
Touchynge a lady / of suche prehemynence
A kynges daughter / of moche magnyfyence
None comparable to hym / in all this regyon
In honour / royalte / power / and dyscrecyon.

And as our mother sayd / to the bysorne
Loke well thy progeny / and all thy lynage
A byllayne orels wers / sothly / thou was borne
Now our dere syster / wolde haue in maryage
As semynge for a pynce / of hye parentage
Than for suche a carle / by a prouerbe auncyent
A lad to wedde a lady / is an inconuenient.

Therefore we charge the / vpon greuous payne
Knowe no suche mater / nor speke of it no more
For yf suche mocyon / come to bs agayne
Of hye presumpcyon / as is done afore
Thou shalt repent / the cause and dede full sore
Now we commaunde the / no forther to contriue
But cease of suche busynesse / in payne of thy lyue.

¶ How the false Werbode complayned vpon Aulfade

and fustyn to kyngs Aulfare by malyce and enuy / and
was the cause of theyr dethe. Ca. xi.

This wyched Werreode / the bedyll of Belpall
The minister of myschet / a sergeant of sathanas
Consyderynge he was / despyed of them all
And sore rebuked / for his outragious trespass
He breunned in enuy / as a man without grace
Cast in his mynde / how he myght woken be
Upon her bretherne / by some subtylte.

Euer from that tyme / he lay in wayte
Seking occasions / on them to complayne
Dayly ymagyned / with subtyll deceyte
Them to subdue / and cause to be slayne
Attendynge oportunitie / to take them in a trayne
By the false entylement / of his mayster Belpall
Prompte to all myschefe / as dysciple naturall.

In fauour of his prynce / by crafte he hym brought
(As now is in custome) with false flattery
Some please theyr mayster / and that is ryght nought
So dyd this Werreode / by subtyll polycy
His vengeable mynde / was hymselfe to magnify
And utterly to lose / these prynces twayne
Or destroye hymselfe / by mysfortune playne.

Lyke as Archythofell / chese counsellour to absalon
Sundry tymes moeued hym / vnto baryauce
And with kyngs Assuerus / in fauour was Amon
Counseyllynge hym euer / vnto great myschaunce
In lyke cause Werreode / moeued to vengeaunce
Werburge. d. i.

Was chefe counſeler / to Aulfer the kyng
Whiche brought hym ſelfe to ſhame / and euyl endynge.

The elder prynce Aulfade / in his dyſporte
Uſed haukyng / huntynge / for a paſt tyme
But vnto huntynge namely / was his reſorte
Euery day in the morowe / longe afore pryme
And as it fortunèd / vpon a tyme
A myghty harte reyled was / courſed a longe ſpace
Whome Aulfade purſued / with pleaſure and ſolace.

This harte ſore ſtrayned / ranne for his ſocour
As all deer done / of theyr propre
To a well with water / after his great labour
Hym to reconforte / and the more freſher be
Wherby ſaynt Cead / had his oratorye
The wylde harte there lay / full ſecrete and ſtyll
And ſuffered this holy man / to do all his wyll.

This bleſſed byſhop moeued with pyte
Couered this ſayd harte / with bowes and leues alſo
Put a ſmall corde / aboute his necke trule
And after commaunded hym ſpedly to go
To the wylde woodes / whens he came fro
His paſture to ſeke / for ſaynt Cead knewe truly
It was a ſygne folowynge / of ſome great myſery.

(As Bede wytnelleth) this holy confeſſour
Was byſhop of Lychefelde / and Couentre
Whiche for the loue of our ſauour
In wylderneſſe dwelled / all ſolytarye
Contented with fruytes / of the wylde tree

With rootes / herbes / water / for his sustentacyon
Endurynge penaunce / with due contemplacyon.

This venerable pryncce / ensuyng this great harte
Approched to his cell / with great dylgence
Tenderly requyrynge / where and in what parte
This harte escaped / so ferre out of presence
This holy man answered / with all reuerence
Beestes / byrdes / fowles / I kepe none at all
But I knowe the instructour / of thy helthe eternall.

By this brute beest / thou shall perceyue well
The sacramentes of holy chyrche euerychone
To encrese thy byleue / by our ghostly counsell
And so to be baptyled / and haue remysyon
By dyuers brute beestes / for mannes saluacyon
Our lord hath shewed / secretes mystryall
To his electe persones / by grace supernall.

To Noe came conforte / after the great deluge
By a dowre / bryngynge a braunche of Olyue
To the prophet Hely / a rauens dyd refuge
Brought hym his sustenaunce / and saued his lyue
Unto saynt Eustach / full memoratyue
Our lord appered / in a hartes lykenes
To whome he obeyed / gladly with mekenes.

Of whiche examples / pryncce Gulsade gladde was
Thankynge god and saynt Ceas / that he thyder come
And sayd holy father / fulfilled with grace
If ye can supply / my instaunte petycyon
That the sayd harte / myght retourne hyder soone
Werburge. d.ii.

Whiche is now in wyldernesse / vnto our presence
Than to your doctryne / I wyll gyue fully credence.

Saynt Ceas vnto prayer / deuoutely went
And the wyld harte / frome the wood came hastely
With the corde in his necke / apperynge euydent
And in theyr presence / stode full ryght soberly
Fayr sone than he sayd / byleue than stedfastly
Understande ye may / all thyng possible is
To a faythfull persone / that perfyttely byleuys.

Aulfade comforted / and in the fayth probate
fell downe to his kete / with humble deuocyon
Desyrynge baptym / to be regenerate
Vnto our sauour / for his soules saluacyon
Saynt Ceas blessed / the well that season
And baptysed this pryncce / in name of the trynitye
Was preest and godfather / for want of compayne.

This chrysten pryncce / tarped with hym all nyght
In fastyng / prayer / and medytacyon
And was refresshed / naturally in syght
With bodyly and ghostly sustentacyon
The next day receyued / the holy comunion
With lycence departed / to his father agayne
The harte to the forest / recourfed certayne.

The thyrde day after / his brother Ruffyn
followynge the same harte / by deuyn prouydence
Was well instructed / in ghostly doctryne
Baptysed by saynt Ceas / & communed with reuerence
And as it fortunied / by playne experyence

Of all the proces done / to the elder brother
All thynges dyd happe / ryght so to the other.

Afore this season / chrystes sayth moost gracyous
Thugh this lande / was preched in euery place
By bysshop fynane / and Jerumannus
Whiche Jeruman of east Englande / fyrst byssop was
And with saynt Ermenylde / came hyder by grace
yet fully conuerted / was not Alersee regyon
Clene frome ydolatry / vnto this season.

These forsayd prynces / conuerted newly
By blessed Cead / to chrysten relygion
Dayly to hym resorted / for counseyll ghostly
To encrease in vertue / and holy perfeccyon
With lycence pretended / they wolde togyder come
Unto his oratory / from the kynges hall
Under colour of Huntynge / as they dyd it call.

And as it is wyrtten / in holy scrypture
Whoso is a sure frende / loueth stedfastly
And who is enemy / putteth dyligent cure
Ayschese to accomplishe / moost studiously
The false Wherebode suspectynge / euidently
The newe conuersyon / of these prynces twayne
Prepared hym craftely / to take them in a trayne.

He watched on them / secretly euery day
To knowe theyr resorte / and vnto what place
Lyke as a hounde folowynge / these prynces to bytray
Or a dogge dothe a dere / by sent of the chas
Whan he had perceyued / how all thynges was.

He compased in mynde / by false inuencion
To complayne to the kynge / for theyr destruccyon.

My synguler goode lorde / and moost pryncypall
Sayd this Wherebode / the fals traytour
Pleaseth your goodnes / and grace specyall
To my supplicacyon / to be a protectour
Ye haue two prynces / myghty in honour
Whiche are my lordes / and euer shalbe
If they wolde be true / to your soueraynte

They haue refused / the more pyte is
your auneynt lawes / and sectes euerychone
And with your lycence / haue done yet more amys
For now they be subiecte / to a newe relyggyon
Utterly refusynge / your decrees and olde custome
Folowynge the counseyll / and mynde of a tenyor
Called byllhop Cead / theyr specyall auctor.

your strayte commaundmentes / they dayly despyce
And purpose I tell you / in secretenes
Unto your persone / to do moche preiudyce
To murther or poyson you / shortly doubtles
And so for to reygne / and gouerne your ryches
Bytwene them twayne / to dreyde your lande
By fals conspyracy / as ye shal vnderstande.

With these false tales / and many other mo
The kynge was moeued / to malyce and yre
By his compleccyon / as he was wont to do
More cruell than a beest / as feruent as the fyre
Depely affyrmyng / that dethe shulde be theyr hyre

If he myght take them / in any place
They shulde be slayne / and suffer withouten grace.

In the morowe after / whan Phebus began to clere
The kynge toke Merbode / with hym secretly
To try out the truthe / and how it wolde appere
Wheder his prynces / were gone to the oratory
If it were so / he sende hym pryuely
To gyue them knowlege / of his entent
For to remooue / from his hasty Judgment.

The father had pyte / bpon his chyldren naturall
Wolde not haue slayne them / the sothe to say
Therefore he sende / the seruaunt of Belyall
To conuay them fro thens / some other way
The kynge knewe hymselfe / not able that day
To refrayne his yre / and cruell hastynesse
Gyuen to hym of nature / in suche great dystresse.

This wycked Merbode / came to the oratory
And sawe these prynces / in great deuocyon
Counceyled his message / by malysce and enuy
Retourned to the kynge / hastily and soone
Newly complaynyng / by fals ymagynacyon
A hundreth folde worse / than at the fyrst tyme
With new addycyons / to byngne them to ruyne.

And whan the kynge / approached nygh the cell
Herynge the complayntes / of this fals knyght
The chyldren perceyued / a voyce ryght well
Cesled of theyr prayers / and came forth full ryght
On whome whan Aulfere / had ones a syght

He was sore moeued / as hote as the fyre
Agaynst her chyldren / that loued hym entyre.

But by the malyce / and wyched temptacyon
Of the deuyl / mannes olde mortall enemy
And what by the false crafty suggestyon
Of Wyched Merehode / fulfylled with enuy
And by his owne hastynesse / and cruell fury
These prynces were slayne / Gulsade and Ruffyn
Now glorious martyrs / reygnyng in heuyn.

After whan kynge Gulsfer / approached his castell
And bryneth was entred / into his hall
Incontinently a spyrite / the false fende of hell
Entred fals Merehode / after the people all
Inwardly hym bered / with peynes continuall
That his armes and handes / he dyd horribly tere
Whiche sodayne benegaunce / all the courte dyd fere.

He rored and yelled / lyke a wyld bull
Shewed all the myschese / malyce and enuy
Done agaynst the martyrs / with a mynde yrefull
So sore constrayned / with peynes greuously
The deuyl ceased not / his dolours to multiply
Tyll his fylthy soule / compelled sore was
For to expyre / for his hydeous trespas.

¶ How kynge Gulsfer was conuerted & toke great re-
pentaunce for his offences. And by the counseyl of saynt
Ceade was a deuoute man / and a good benefactour to
holy chyrche / and a founder of dyuers holy places rely-
gious. Ca.xii.

Than Culfer consyderynge / with due dyscrecyon
His cruell hastynes / and surpous mynde
How ferre he had / abused his reason
Agaynst his chyldren / by nature and kynde
He sore repented / in hystory as we fynde
His greuous trespass / and homycyde bunnaturall
In consyence greued / for his synnes mortall.

Namely lamentynge / in soule his apostasy
After his baptyme / and ghostly conuersyon
And for the departure / of his prynces truly
Contrary to ryght / kynde and all reason
The losse of his fame / thugh this regyon
A dethe to his quene / and his louers all
Greuous to his kynnesmen / and frendes naturall.

All these consydered / with due cymmisaunce
He wayled and weped / sobbynge full sore
Plonged in sorowe / heuynes / and greuaunce
Lamentynge his offence / a thousande tymes therfore
His intoilerable payne / encreased more and more
Mofully he went / to his bed by and by
Supposynge some dethe / withouten any remedy.

Some of his louers / beyng there present
Gaue hym theyr counseyll / to hunte in the forest
Some to dysportes / and pleasures euident
Some vnto melody / all thoughtes to degest
But Ermenylde his quene / whiche loued hym best
Counseyled hym truly / to take contracyon
And mendes make / by due satysfaccyon.

Merburge.

e.i.

Of this ghosly counseyll / the kyng was very glad
And in the morowe after / prepared besyly
With mekenesse to seke / blessed saynt Cead
So whan the kyng came / to his oratory
The bysshop was at masse / and ryght consequently
fro heuen descended / so glorpyous a lyght
That of the mystery / Quilfer had no syght.

Whan masse was ended / saynt Cead his vestures caste
Upon the sonne beame / by myracle there hangynge
Supposynge on a forme / and made moche haste
To mete at the doore / mekely the sayd kyng
Whiche laye there prostrate / penaunce desyrnge
With reuerence hym eleuate / and gaue an exortacyon
The kyng was agreable / for to do satysfaccyon.

The bysshop hym enioyned / in parte of penaunce
To destrope all ydolles / and sectes of ydolatry
In all his realme / and the temples of paganes
To translate to the honour / of god almyghty
With preestes and clerkes / to pray and synge deuoutly
Also peas and iustyce / to be kepte continuall
With the werkes of mercy / to be bled in specyall.

Forther he enioyned hym / of his charyte
Monasteryes to make / of great perfeccyon
Endowed with landes / possessed in lyberte
Therin for to set / men of relygyon
To pray to our lord / for his saluacyon
Whiche Quilfer promyted / to fulfyll gladle
As soone as he myght / by possybylyte.

Then the foresayd kynge / and the holy confessor
Went to theyr prayers / in the oratory
And as the kynge looked up / to our sauyour
The sayd sacrat bestures / he sawe euidently
Hangynge on the sonne beame / full merueylously
His gloues / his gyrdell / the kynge had upon
Whiche shortly to grounde / falled adowne.

Wherby he perceyued / the great holynesse
Of blessed saynt Cead / and interyor deuocyon
Desyred his prayer / dayly with mekenesse
To almyghty god / for his remysyon
Frome thens departed / with his benedyccyon
Joyfull in his soule / towarde his place
Thankynge god mekely / of his great grace.

As the kynge promysed / to our sauyour
Shortly he auoyded / all ydolatry
Bynened theyr ydolles / correcked theyr errour
Translated theyr temples / vnto god almyghty
Founded monasteryes / of relyggon many
Of men and women / gaue them possessyons
Landes / rentes / ryches / to encrease deuocyon

Namely he founded / a ryche monastery
For dethe of the prynces / in satysfaccyon
To the honour of god / and saynt Peter truly
Called Peterborowe abbay / in all this regyon
Endowed it with rentes / lybertes / possessyon
A place where many / relyggyous persones be
Seruyng day and nyght / our lorde with charyte.

Merburge.

c.ii.

Also there was founded / at Stone a pyore
In the honour of god / and the martyrs twayne
Possessed with landes / rentes and lyberte
Where deuoute chanons / ben inhabyte certayne
Miracles and sygnes / haue ben shewed there playne
To the laude and praye / of god omnyppotent
And of these holy martyrs / patrones there present.

¶ Of the feruent desyre & great deuocyon y^e saynt Wer-
burge hadde to be relygious / & of y^e dayly supplycacyōs
she made to the kynge her father for the same. Ca. xiii.

As this myghty prynces / encreased in age
So dayly encreased / her good condycyons
That greatly enioyed / her honorable lynage
Consyderynge in her / suche vertuous dysposycyons
In bygyls / prayers / and ghostly medytacyons
Set all her mynde / power / myght / and mayne
To serue our saupour / day and nyght certayne.

She well consydered / with due dyscrecyon
Of this present lyfe / the great wretchydnesse
How dredefull it is / full of barpacyon
Deceuable / peryllous / and of no syhernesse
The tyme vncertayne / to be knownen doubtlesse
For here is no cytee / nor sure dwelypynge place
All thyng is transytory / in short proces and space.

Wherefore this byrgyn / gladde and benyvolent
Folowynge the counseyl / of blessed Maathewe
Was on of fyue byrgyns / euer redy present
Had her lampe replete / with oyle full of vertue

Kedy for to mete / her spouse swete Ihesu
With charytable werkes / in her soule contynuall
Therefore she was taken / to his blys eternall.

She well considered / the wordes of the gospell
Who refuses pleasures / and naturall generacyon
for the loue of Ihesu / rewarded shalbe well
With a hundreth folde grace / here for theyr guerdon
And after this lyfe / haue eterne fruytyon
Whiche she remembred / and euer fro that day
On her father wolde call / and mekely to hym say.

Reuerent myghty pryncce / and lord honorable
Moost dere byloued father / my synguler helpe & socour
My trust / trefure / and solace / to me moost ampyable
Instantly I beseeche you / for loue of our sauoure
And of his mother mary / of byrgens the floure
With all the company / that in heuen be
My humble petycyon / now graunt it vnto me.

Well byloued father / this is my fully mynde
My instaunte desyre / and humble supplicacyon
By the grace of god / maker of all mankynde
And by your lyfence / helpe / and turycyon
I purpose to enter / into holy relygyon
And utterly refuse / all pleasures transytory
To be professed / at the house of Elv.

O my dere doughter / sayd this noble kynge
My pleasure / solace / and hope of my gladnesse
Moost dere byloued / and my synguler swete derlynge
I well consyder / your vertue and sadnesse
Werburge. e.iii.

Also there was founded / at Stone a pyore
 In the honour of god / and the martyrs twayne
 Possessed with landes / rentes and lyberte
 Where deuoute chanons / ben inhabyte certayne
 Miracles and sygnes / haue ben shewed there playne
 To the laude and prayse / of god omnyppotent
 And of these holy martyrs / patrones there present.

C Of the feruent desyre & great deuocyon y^r saynt Wer-
 burge hadde to be relygious / & of y^r dayly supplycacyōs
 he made to the kynge her father for the same. Ca.xiii.

As this myghty prynces / encreased in age
 So dayly encreased / her good condycyons
 That greatly enioyed / her honorable lynage
 Consyderynge in her / such vertuous dysposcyons
 In bygyls / prayers / and ghostly medytacyons
 Set all her mynde / power / myght / and mayne
 To serue our saupour / day and nyght certayne.

She well consydered / with due dyscrecyon
 Of this present lyfe / the great wretchydnesse
 How dredefull it is / full of varyacyon
 Deceuable / peryllous / and of no syker nesse
 The tyme vncertayne / to be knownen doubtlesse
 For here is no cytee / nor sure dwellynge place
 All thyng is transytory / in short proces and space.

Wherefore this byrgyn / gladde and benyuolent
 folowynge the counseyl / of blessed frathewe
 Was on of fyue byrgyns / euer redy present
 Had her lampe replete / with oyle full of vertue

Redy for to mete / her spouse swete Ihesu
With charytable werkes / in her soule continuall
Therefore she was taken / to his blys eternall.

She well consydered / the wordes of the gospell
Who refuses pleasures / and naturall generacyon
for the loue of Ihesu / rewarded shalbe well
With a hundreth folde grace / here for theyr guerdon
And after this lyfe / haue eterne fruytyon
Whiche she remembred / and euer fro that day
On her father wolde call / and mekely to hym say.

Reuerent myghty prynce / and lorde honoꝛable
Most dere byloued father / my synguler helpe & socour
My trust / trespure / and solace / to me most ampyable
Instauntly I beseeche you / for loue of our sauoure
And of his mother mary / of byrgyns the floure
With all the company / that in heuen be
My humble petycyon / now graunt it vnto me.

Well byloued father / this is my fully mynde
My instaunte desyre / and humble supplicacyon
By the grace of god / maker of all mankynde
And by your lyfence / helpe / and trespure
I purpose to enter / into holy relygion
And utterly refuse / all pleasures transytory
To be professed / at the house of Ely.

O my dere doughter / sayd this noble kynge
My pleasure / solace / and hope of my gladnesse
Most dere byloued / and my synguler swete derlynge
I well consyder / your vertue and sadnesse
Werburge. e.iii.

your instaunt request / and humble gentylnesse
And of your desyre / inwardly I am gladd
But yet your motyon / makes my herte full sadde.

All my ioye and conforste / now resteth in the
Syth thy dere betherne / from vs ben agone
Thou arte the trusty treasure / to thy mother and me
Our synguler solace / and sure consolacyon
Wherfore swete derlyng / as for my heyre alone
I wolde the mary / and a quene the make
If thou wyll consent / and my counseyll take.

Consyder and beholde / thugh all this lande
Take the a maryage / at thyne owne pleasure
A prynce moost valyaunt / moost noble to be founde
And of helpe and ayde / I shall the assure
With ryches / royalte / welthe / and tresure
Clothes of golde / and royall ryche apparell
And all thynges necessary / as man can of tell.

Remembre also / how after course of kynde
Agee dothe soze greue / thy moder and me also
Therfore naturall loue (swete chylde) dothe me bynde
To gyue the best counseyll / what thou shall do
To honour and worshyp / how thou may come to
Whiche great renowne / and hye estate certayne
To se the a quene / wyll make vs ponge agayne.

God ordeyned matrymony / fyrst in Paradyse
Bytwene man & woman / whan he the worlde dyd make
That mankynde myght encrese / multiply and ryse
Eche persone at pleasure / a spouse for them to take

Now ioyned by holy chyrche / all other to forsake
The chyld of the father / to take his dyscyplene
And after that to teche / his yllue theyr doctryne.

Also man and beest / haue dysposycyon naturall
To bynge forth theyr lykenesse / by generacyon
But man hauynge reason / and fre wyll with all
As lawe requyeth / hath his procreacyon
Under true matrymony / by his owne eleccyon
Or els to obserue / and lyue in pure byrgynyte
For the greater meryte / and rewarde of gloye.

And yf all maydens / shulde kepe theyr chastyte
As ye now do / how shulde the worlde encrese
Swete louely creature / ryght ioyfull wolde I be
To kysse a chyld of thyne / hauynge thy lykenesse
And se the also coronate / as a myghty pryncesse
Enclyne dere derlynge / thy mynde to myne entent
And all these sayd honours / wyll folowe consequent.

C Of the meke answer saynt Werburge gaue to her fa-
ther whan she was moeued to maryage. Ca. xiiii.

The holi mayd / whā she knewe her fathers mynde
Her soule was replete / with woo & penyuenesse
And sore began to wepe / after cours of kynde
The salte teeres dystylled / for payne and heurynesse
By her ruddy chekes spynnyng / full fayre doubtelesse
Pteous to beholde / but whan the foresayd mayde
Ceased of her sorowe / thus to hym she sayde.

Most beest bploued father / nexte to god almyght
Werburge. e. iiii.

your kynde gentyll mocyon / wolde moeue inwardely
The mynde of any creature / to folowe you ryght
Or any stony stomake / to relent and apply
And resolute eche harde herte / to waylynge dolefully
Contyderynge on euery parte / with good dyscrecyon
To accepte or refuse / this harde eleccyon.

Father I haue ben to you / meke and obedyent
Euer syth I had / yeres of dyscrecyon
Gladde to obserue / your hye commaundment
With loue interpor / and humble intencion
And so wyll contynue / with lowly submyssyon
In this present lyfe / whyle I do endure
Of my loue and prayer / euer ye shalbe sure.

But moost louely father / I pray you hertfully
Take no dyspleasure / pardon what I shall say
My soule / my herte / and mynde / is set stydfassly
To serue my lorde god / nyght and also day
Neuer to be maryed / by no maner of way
For sothly I haue bowed / my true byrgynyte
Unto Ihesu / the seconde persone in trynnyte.

That is my spouse / and blessed sauour
For whose loue refused / in certaynte haue I
All worldely pleasures / welth / ryches and honour
With all boorde busynesse / and cures transytory
My loue on hym is sette / so sure and feruently
That nothyng shall separate / my hert hym fro
Sekeness nor helthe / pleasure / peyne / ne wo.

Also my full entent / was neuer otherwyse

Than to be handmayde / to my lord Ihesu
And of my soule and body / to make hym sacryfyce
For my ghosly welthe / all byces to subdue
He is my dere spouse / solace / helthe moost true
On hym is all my herte / and hase ben set alway
And euer shalbe / vnto my endynge day.

In this wretched worlde / we can not longe endure
And of this present lyfe / we are in no suerte
As we haue deserued / so we shalbe sure
After this pylgrymage / rewarded for to be
For mercy and grace / therfore mekely call we
Whyle we haue tyme and space / for than it is to late
Whan dethe with his darte / sayth to us chekemate.

Wherfore dere father / I shewe you now agayne
All my hole herte / desyre and entent
Whiche euer hath ben / and so shalbe certayne
For to be relygious / chaste / and obedyent
Namely at Ely / for theyr vertue excellent
Father I requyre you / for chrystes loue and charyte
My meke supplicacyon / now graunte it vnto me.

The kynge well consydered / his daughters desyre
Her constaunte true mynde / and pure deuocyon
Graunted her petcyon / with synguler loue entyre
Trustynge by her prayer / and dayly supplicacyon
Vnto heuen blysse / the rather for to come
Her mother Ermenylde / was gladd of this tydynge
And lauded full lowly / our lord and heuen kynge.

¶ Now saynt Werburge was made a moyne after her

desyre at the monastery of Ely vnder saynt Audy/lady
and abbesse. Ca.xb.

Than the kyng remēbred / with due cyrcūstaunce
The excellent vertue / sadnes / and grauyte
Of his dere doughter / and the perfyte constaunce
Her humble petycyon / and pure byrgnyte
He thanked our lorde / with great humylyte
Of his infynyte grace / that so royall a flour
Frome hym descended / to his prayse and honoure.

He sende messages / in all goodly hast
With letters myssyue / thugh his regyon
Commaundyng his subiectes / they shoulde full fast
By a day assygned / be redy euerychone
In theyr best maner / with hym for to gone
To bynge his doughter / to the hous of Ely
There to be relygious / after her desyder.

When the day was come / of theyr appoyntment
The nobles of the realme / and lordes were redy
To attende on theyr souerayne / at his commaūdyment
Kyng Alfer prepared / all thyng pleasauntly
And of his court / had chosen a noble company
In theyr best aray / royalte / and renowne
To offer saynt Werburge / to god and relygion.

The kyng on his Journey / rode forthe royally
The quene hym folowed / as is the custome
Werburge succeeded them consequently
The peeres and his counseyll / knewe well theyr rowme
Dukes / erles / lordes / and many a worthy barowne

**Knyghtes / squyers / gentyls / of her kynred also
With ladyes and gentyl women / & seruañtes both two.**

**When the kynge approached / the sayd monastery
Saynt Audy than abbess / toke her holy couent
And mette the sayd kynge / and all his company
With solempne processyon / and gretynge benyuolent
Prayynge our lorde god omnytpotent
Whiche of his goodnes / to that congregacyon
Sende them a syster / of suche perfeccyon.**

**Merburge requyred / by the order of charyte
Meekely on her knees / to enter relyggon
Saynt Audy receyued / of her benygnyte
And graunted fre lycence / after her petycyon
Gladde were also / the hole congregacyon
And sange (Te deum) with moche reuerence
Magnifynge our lorde / of his prouydence.**

**She was receyued / with moche solempnyte
Into the holy order / after her entent
To proue her sadnes / and humplyte
(As is the custome) and so be obedyent
To lyue euer after / humble / chaste / and contynent
Than dyd they? Joye / merueylously encreas
Consyderynge her pacyens / and perfyte holynes.**

**Her royall dyademe / and thynnyng coronall
Was fyrst refuted / for loue of our sauoure
The poore bayle accepted / and the symple pall
The royall ryche purpull / reiected that same houre
With other clothes of golde / sylkes of great honoure**

She toke lowe appareyll / bestures that were blake
All her pleisant garmentes / she clerely dyd forsake.

Also she refused / her fathers realme and royalte
All ryches / rentes / pleasures / possession
With all worldely honoures / full of banyte
Lowly submyttyng her / vnder subieccyon
Vertu to encrease / myndyng moost relyggon
She refused yet more her owne proper wyll
Put all to her abbess / her order to fulfyll.

C Of the great solempnyte kynge Gulfer made at the
ghostly maryage of saynt Werburge his doughter / to al
his louers / colyns / and frendes. Ca. xvi.

Kynge Gulfer her father / at this ghostly spousage
Prepared great tryumphes / and solempnyte
Made a royall feest / as custome is of maryage
Sende for his frendes / after good humanityte
Kepte a noble housholde / shewed great lyberalyte
Bothe to ryche and poore / that to this feest wolde come
No man was denyed / every man was well come.

Her uncles and aunces / were present there all
Ethelred / and Merwalde / and Mercelly also
The blessed kynges / whome sayntes we do call
Saint Keneswyd / lait Keneburg / theyr systers both two
And of her noble lygnage / many other mo
Were redy that season / with reuerence and honour
At this noble tryumphe / to do all theyr deuour.

Tho kynges mette them / with theyr company

Egypct kynge of kent / brother to the quene
The seconde was Aldulphe kynge of the east party
Brother to saynt Audry / wyfe and mayde serene
With dyuers of theiꝝ progeny / and nobles as I wene
Dukes / erles / barons / and lordes ferre and nere
In theiꝝ best aray / were present all in fere.

It were full tedpous / to make descripcyon
Of the great tryumphes / and solempne royalte
Belongynge to the feest / the honour and prouysyon
By playne declaracyon / bpon euery partye
But the sothe to say / withouten ambyguyte
All herbes and floures / fragraunt sayre and swete
Were strawed in halles / and layd vnder theiꝝ fete.

Clothes of golde and arras / were hanged in the hall
Depaynted with pictures / and hystories manyfolde
Well wrought and craftely / with precyous stones all
Glyteryng as Phebus / and the beten golde
Lyke an erthly paradyse / pleasaunt to beholde
As for the sayd moynes / was not them amonge
But prayenge in her cell / as done all nouyce yonge.

The story of Adam / there was goodly wrought
And of his wyfe Eue / bytwene them the serpent
How they were deceyued / and to theiꝝ peynes brought
There was Cayn and Abell / offerynge theiꝝ present
The sacryfice of Abell / accepte full euydent
Cuball and Cubalcain / were purtrayed in that place
The inuentours of musyke / and craftes by great grace.

Doe and his chyppe / was made there curiously

Sendyng forth a rauen / whiche neuer came agayne
And how the dowre returned / with a braunche hastily
A token of conforte and peace / to man certayne
Abraham there was / standyng upon the mount playne
To offer in sacryfye / Isaac his dere sone
And how the shepe for hym / was offered in oblacyon.

The twelue sones of Jacob / there were in purtrapture
And how into Egypt / yonge Ioseph was solde
There was inprysoned / by a false coniectour
After in all Egypte / was ruler (as is tolde)
There was in pycture / Moyses wyse and holde
Our lorde apperyng / in busshes flammyng as fyre
And nothyng therof bent / lefe / tree / nor spyre.

The ten plages of Egypte / were well embost
The chyldren of Israell / passyng the reed see
Kynge Pharao drowned / with all his proude hoost
And how the two tables / at the mounte of Synaye
Were gyuen to Moyses / and how soone to ydolatry
The people were proude / and punysshed were therfore
How Datan and Abyron / for pryde were lost full poure.

Duke Josue was ioyned / after them in pycture
Ledyng the Israhelytes / to the lande of promysyon
And how the sayd lande / was dyuyded by mesure
To the people of god / by equall sundry porcyon
The Judges and bysshops / were there euerychone
Theyr noble actes / and tryumphes Marcyall
Freschly were brownded / in these clothes royall.

Nexte to hye boorde lorde / appered fayre and bryght

kyng Saul and Dauid / and prudent Salomon
Roboas succedynge / whiche soone lost his myght
The good kyng Ezechyas / and his generacyon
And so to the Machabees / and dyuers other nacyon
All these sayd stoyres / so rychely done and wrought
Belögyng to kyng Aulfer / agayn y^e tyme were brought

But ouer the hye desse / in the pryncypall place
Where the sayd the kynges / late crowned all
The best hallynge hanged / as reason was
Wherein were wrought / the .ix. ordres angelycall
Dyuyded in the Hierarchyes / not cessynge to call
Sanctus / sanctus / sanctus / blessed be the trynyte
Dominus deus sabaoth / the persones in one deyte.

Nerte in orde supynge / sette in goodly purtrayture
Was our blessed lady / floure of femynyte
With the twelue apostles / echeone in his fygure
And the foure euangelystes / wrought moost curpously
Also the dyscyples / of chryst in theyr degre
Prechynge and techynge / vnto euery nacyon
The saythtes of holy chyrche / for theyr saluacyon.

Martyrs than folowed / ryght manyfessly
The holy innocentes / whome Herode had slayne
Blessed saynt Stephan / the prothomartyr truly
Saynt Laureçe / saynt Vincet / sufferynge great payne
With many other mo / than here ben now certayne
Of whiche sayd martyrs / exsample we may take
Pacence to obserue / in herte for chrystes sake.

Confessours approached / ryght conuenient

fresshly embrodred / in ryche tyllhewe and tyne
Saynt Nicholas saynt Benedycte / and his couent
Saynt Jerom / Basylyus / and saynt Augustyne
Gregory the great doctour / Ambrose and saynt Martyne
All these were sette / in goodly purtrayture
Them to beholde / was a heuenly pleasure.

Myrgyns them folowed / crowned with the lily
Amonge whome our lady / chefe presydent was
Some crowned with rooses / for theyr great byctory
Saynt Katheryne / saynt Margarete / saynt Agathas
Saynt Cecyly / saynt Agnes / and saynt Charytas
Saynt Lucye / saynt Menefryde / and saynt Apolyn
All these were brothered / the clothes of golde within.

Upon the other syde / of the hall sette were
Noble auntyent storyes / & how the stronge Sampson
Subdued his enemyes / by his myghty power
Of Hector of Troy / slayne by fals treason
Of noble Arthur / kynge of this regyon
With many other mo / whiche it is to longe
Playnly to expresse / this tyme you amonge.

The tables were couered / with clothes of wyaper
Rychely enlarged / with syluer and with golde
The cupborde with plate / byrrynge fayre and clere
Marshallles theyr offyces / fulfylled manyfolde
Of myghty wyne plenty / bothe newe and olde
All maner kynde / of meetes delycate
(Whan grace was sayd) to them was preparate.

To this noble feest / there was suche ordynaunce

That nothyng wanted / that gotten myght be
On see and on lande / but there was habundaunce
Of all maner pleasures / to be had for monye
The hordes all charged / full of meet plente
And dyuers subtyltes / prepared sothly were
With cordvall spyces / they? ghestes for to chere.

The Joyfull wordes / and swete communycayon
Spoken at the table / it were harde to tell
Eche man at lyberte / without interrupcyon
Bothe sadnes and mynthes / also pryue counsell
Some adulacyon / some the truthe dyd tell
But the great affates / spake of they? regyons
Knyghtes of they? chyualry / of craftes the comons.

Certayne at eche cours / of seruyce in the hall
Trumpettes blew by / shalmes and claryons
Shewyng they? melody with / toynes musycall
Dyuers other mynstrelles / in crafty proporcyons
Made swete concordance / and lusty danysons
An heuenly pleasure / suche armony to here
Reioysyng the hertes / of the audyence full clere.

A synguler mynstrell / all other ferre passyng
Toyned his instrument / in pleasaunte armony
And sange moost swetely / the company gladyng
Of myghty conquerours / the famous byctory
Wherwith was rauysht / they? spyrytes and memory
Specyally he sange / of the great Alexandere
Of his tryumphes and honours / enduryng. xii. yere.

Solemply he songe / the state of the Romans
Merburge f.i.

Ruled vnder kynges / by polycy and wysedome
Of theyr hye iustyce / and ryghtfull ordynauns
Dayly encreasynge / in worthyp and renowne
Cyll Tarquyne y^r proude kyng / with y^r great cōfusyon
Oppressed dame Lucrece / the wyfe of Colatyne
Kynge neuer reygned in Rome / syth that tyme.

Also how the Romainys / vnder thre dyctatours
Gouerned all regyons / of the worlde ryght wysely
Cyll Julius Cesar / excellynge all conquerours
Subdued Pompeius / and toke the hole monarchy
And the rule of Rome / to hymselfe manfully
But Cassius Brutus / the fals conspyratour
Caused to be slayne / the sayd noble emperour.

After the sayd Julius / succeded his sytter sone
Called Octauianus / in the impervall see
And by his precepte / was made descrepyon
To euery regyon / lande / shyre / and cytee
A trybute to pay / vnto his dygnyte
That tyme was / vnyuersall peas and honour
In whiche tyme was borne / our blessed sauoure.

All these hytories / noble and auncyent
Reioysynge the audyence / he sange with pleasuer
And many other mo / of the newe testament
Pleasaunt and profytable / for theyr soules cure
Whiche he omitted / now not put in vze
The mynysters were redy / theyr offyce to fulfyll
To take by the tables / at theyr lordes wyll.

When this noble feest / and great solempnyte.

Dayly endurynge / a longe tyme and space
Was royally ended / with honour and royalte
Eche kyng at other / lyfence taken hace
And so departed from thens / to theyr place
Kynge Gulfer retourned / with worshyp and renowne
Frome the house of Ely / to his owne mansyon.

¶ Of the holy professyon & ghostly conuersacyon saynt
Merburge bled at Ely in relyggon / vnder saynt Audy
her abbelle and colyn. Ca. xvii.

So whan this byrgyn / the spouse of Ihesu
Had fully contynued / in holy relyggon
With mekenesse / pacyngs / and all vertu
fully the yere / of her probacyon
Than she made instaunce / for her professyon
Unto saynt Audy / her lady and abbelle
Whiche soone was graunted / with great gladnesse.

Ordynaunce they made / and great royalte
Her frendes were called / agaynst that season
She was professed / with great humylyte
The obseruaunce done / with due deuocyon
She made solempne bowe / of ghostly conuersacyon
Stekely to obserue / obedience and chastyte
Endurynge her lyfe / and wylfull pouerte.

By the ersample / of her perfeccyon
Many dyuers persones / of her noble lynage
Refused this worlde / and entred relyggon
Renouynge bayne pleasures / ryches and maryage
Enclyned to vertue / for theyr ghostly awauntage
Merburge f. ii.

As may be specyfied / here after folowynge
Theyr names / theyr affate / and theyr good lyuynge.

Now this glorious byrgyn / after her desyre
Is ghosly maryed / to our lorde Ihesu
Accordynge to her entent / and true loue entyre
She dayly encrefed / frome vertu to vertu
With more strayter lyfe / byces to subdu
The longer she endured / in relyggon
The better she prepared / her herte to deuocyon.

And tho this byrgyn / cleuely dyd forsake
All ryches honours / and pleasures worldly
With all possessyons / for her lordes sake
She thought than she reygned / moost lyke a lady
Cause that she lyued / in chrystes seruyce dayly
And certayne it is / holy scrypture recondynge
Who serues well god / dothe reygne lyke a kynge.

In prayer / penaunce / and / contemplacyon
Was all her busynesse / and study alway
Compasynge by what maner of medytacyon
She myght best please / our lorde to his pay
Offerynge her persone / a true sacryfyce every day
No labour her greued / loue was so feruent
Her body vpon erthe / her soule in heuen lent.

Sweete / comly creatures / ladyes euerychone
Sekynge for pleasures / ryches and arayment
Blynded by your beaute / and synguler affectyon
Consyder this byrgyn / humble and pacyent
A spectacle of vertue / euer obedyent.

Beholde how she hase / clerely layde away
Her royall ryche clothes / and is in meke aray.

your garmentes now be gay and glozyous
Euery yere made / after a newe inuencyon
Of sylke and beluet / costly and petyous
Brothered full ryche / after the best facyon
Shynnyng lyke angels / in your opynyon
Where lesse wolde suffice / and content as well
As all that great cost / folowynge wyse counsell.

A playne example / now ye may take
Of this myghty kynges doughter dere
Whiche for the loue of god / dyd forsake
All suche vayne pleasures / and garmentes clere
She gaue herselfe / to penaunce and prayere
Wherefore saye ladyes / do waye suche vayne
Prepare yourselfe / to vertue and humylte.

Some of lowe byrthe / excellynge theyr degre
Doe couet to haue / as royall ryche besture
Worldly honours / also the sufferaynte
As they were ladyes / by lyne of nature
Of dreadfull mysery / they bere the fygure
Prowde as a pecoche / whelynge full bryght
All is but vayne / contentynge the syght.

B Glozyous byrgyn / replete with synguler grace
Endowed with souerayne gyftes celestyall
Refusynge boide pleasures / whan thou had space
And honours transytory / whiche hath brought in thall
A thousande persones / in ruine to fall
Wierburge.

f.iii.

A myrrour thou arte / of byrgynall clennes
Of true obedyence / and perfyte mekenes.

So Werburge professed / to her rule full ryght
A redolent floure / all vertue to augment
As Lucyfer shynynge / a clere lampe of lyght
for whome her spouse / god sone omnyppotent
Shewed many myracles / to euery pacient
A sygne her loue was / supernaturall
Closed in our lorde / by grace supernall.

The excellent goodnes / of this moynes
And fame of vertue / with humylyte
Transcended all other / in perfyte holynes
So that sundry persones / approached that party
for ghostly conforte / counsell and remedy
Suche as to her came / penyue / woo / and sadde
Departed ioyfull / in soule mery and gladd.

She dayly prouyded / for ghostly treasure
To buyde her a place / a sure mansyon
Euer to remayne / with ioye and endure
In pleasure perpetuall / without corrupcyon
Whiche she optayned / by her deuocyon
After this departure / to reygne as a presydent
In eterne blys / with god omnyppotent

¶ A lytell treatyse of the lyfe of saynt Audry abbessle of
Ely / and of her holy couersacyon and great deuocyon /
vnder whome saynt Werburge was made nonne / and
professed.

Ca. xviij.

The yere of our lorde. hi. C. ix. and thyrty
 Regned saynt Anna / kyng of east Englande
 Whiche maryed saynt Herewith / of the North party
 They had noble yssue / as we vnderstande
 Prynce Aldulph and Jurwyne / in story as is founde
 Saynt Serburge the quene / and blessed Audry
 Saynt Ethelberge / Withburge / a holy progeny.

This blessed Audry / called Etheldred
 Of two great kyngedomes / lynally descendynge
 Was borne in Suffolke / as sayth saynt Bede
 In a lytell byllage / called Ermyng
 This noble prynces / and dere derlyng
 With many great vertues / of grace illumynate
 Magnyfyed her parage / and royall estate.

This blessed Audry / from her yonge auge
 Was dysposed euer / vnto sadnes
 Obedyent lowly / vnto her parentage
 Encreasynge in vertue / and constaunt sobrynes
 Worldely pleasures / dysportes / and wantonnes
 Lyghtnes of language / and all presumpcyon
 In this sayd byrgyn / had no domynacyon.

Sad and demure / she was in countenaunce
 Nothyng enclyned / vnto fragylyte
 Benyng and pacyent / without perturbaunce
 Meke / curteys / gentyll / full of humylyte
 Pryde / stateleues / and sensualyte
 Were not in her soude / by any condycyon
 Curteyle in byhauour / vnto every persone.

No man was greued / nor toke dyspleasure
At this sayd mayden / in her fathers hall
Every honest persone / and reasonable creature
Were pleased with her / bothe one and all
None dyscontent / pryuate nor generall
She was so meke / and full of pacyence
That people desyred / to come to her presence.

She was beauteous / fayre and amiable
Pleasaunte to beholde / in gyftes of nature
Her countenaunce comly / swete / louely / and stable
Nothyng dysposed / vnto worldly pleasure
More lyke an angell / by all coniecture
Than a fragyll mayde / of sensuall appetyte
For in bayne pleasures / she had no delyte.

When that she came / to yeres of dyscrecyon
Dyuers her moeued / in way of maryage
Some offered ryches / royalte / and renoune
Some other possessyons / landes and herytage
And some the sufferaynte / her mynde to assuage
All these she refused / for the loue of Ihesu
To whome she auowed / her chastyte full tru.

After that Venus / had her longe assayed
To peruerte her mynde / to worldly affectyon
And of all nettes and engynes / therof had sayled
Than came to her presence / a prynce of renoune
Called duke Combert / of the east regyon
Whiche longe desyred / to haue her in spousage
At the laste optayned / the wyll of her parentage.

Unto whiche thyng / he wolde neuer encline
for all the mocyon / of her hye parentes
Tyll she was assured / by heuenly doctryne
To kepe her byrgynne / clere in conscyens
Than she consented / without concupyscens
And with the sayd duke / she lyued in chastyte
Bothe mayden and wyfe / almost yeres thre.

After whose dethe / she remayned in Ely
In fastynge / prayer / byrgyls / and penaunce
Whiche place was gyuen / to her Joynt and dowry
By Combert her husbnde / with great pleasaunce
This yle of Ely / by deuyne purueaunce
With muddy waters / is compased aboute
Theyr enemyes to greue / and strongly to holde out.

Thyder came Egbyrt / kyng of the north parte
To desyre saynt Audry / in matrymony
To whome she wolde neuer / consent in herte
for no maner counseyll / that myght be done truly
Tho her syster Serburge / moeued her tenderly
Tyll the angell of god / assured her to be
Quene / wyfe / and mayde / kepyng byrgynne.

Than Audry graunted / maryed for to be
Unto this foresayd / noble kyng Egtryde
And at the maryage / was great solemnyte
Tryumphe honoures / on euery syde
Great cost and royalte / they dyd proude
Frome Ely departed / vnto his owne place
In the North parte dwellynge / with great solace.

Merburge.

G.i.

By the grace of our lord god / moost of myght
And helpe of his mother / blessed mayd mary
By prayer of Audry / and by myracle ryght
Toggyder they lyued / bothe in pure chastyte
The naturall mocyon / of his lascypte
Was shortly flaked / and feruent desyre
By myracle / as water quencheth the fyre.

When he apperceyued / her asured constauce
Her perfyte holynes / and chaste contynence
His herte reioised / of her contynuaunce
Of whome she desyred / with humble reuerence
And synguler supplicacyon / to haue fre lysence
At Canwood abbay / to enter relyggon
Whiche the kynge graunted / for her deuocyon.

Saynt Ebba syster / unto saynt Oswolde
Was abbesse and ruler / of that congregacyon
Where blessed Audry / ryght as she wolde
Was reuerently receyued / into relyggon
And after the yere / of her probacyon
Professed there was / by bysshop Wylfryde
Where all worldly honours / she set on syde.

Frome thens she departed / to the ple of Ely
More quyetly to lyue / out of busynesse
For dede of the kynge / her husbände truly
Purposynge to take her / frome that holynesse
She toke two maydens / with her doubtlesse
And in theyr Journay / our lord of his grace
Shewed dyuers myacles / at eche restinge place.

The archebysshop of yorke / Wylfryde her confessour
Was deppryed frome his benyfice / by the kyngc cruelly
Observed pacyence / laudynge our saupour
And folowed saynt Audry / to the place of Ely
Whiche (as afore is sayd) was her Joynt and dowry
And electe her abbess / on that congregacyon
Most worthy to be / for her holy conuersacyon.

Where Audry buryded / a chyrche of our lady
With helpe of kyngc Aldulph / her brother naturall
Bystaunt a myle / frome the olde monastery
founded by saynt Austyn / for meryte spyrytuall
Whiche place all desolate / she edyfied full specyall
By her prouysyon / an other noble monastery
The yere of grace / fyre hundredeth seventy and thye.

When the werke was ended / as her wyll was
She endowed the abbay / with fraunches and lyberte
And gaue the hole yle of Ely / to that place
With all commodytes / profettes / and yllues fre
Frome all exaccyons / exempte clerely to be
Of kyngc and bysshop / confyrmed it at Rome
With all prelates & prynces / consentynge of this regyon.

In short tyme and space / to Audry dyd resorte
Relygious men and women / a great company
Professed in that place / for theyr ghostly consorte
Renounsynge bayne pleasures / & honours transytory
Amonge whome saynt Werburge / professed solemply
Promysed in audyence / to lyue a lyfe monestycall
After saynt Benettes rule / for the lyfe eternall.

Werburge

g.ii.

Also the yere of grace / fyfte hundredeth seventy and nyne
 In the moneth of Julii / in the nyynth kalendas
 To heuen departed / saynt Audry the quene
 Than reygnyng in Kent / kyng Lothary by grace
 Aldulph in eest Englande / her brother whiche was
 Kyng Ostryde her husbände / in Northumberlande
 Also kyng Ethelrede / than reygnyng in Mercelande

¶ A breue reherfal of y^r lyfe of saynt Serburge / graūd
 mother to saynt Werburge. And of her comynge to Ely
 to her syster Audry from Shepay monastery. Ca. xix.

The holy matrone / and quene saynt Serburge
 A kynges doughter / a moder to kynges twayne
 Syster to saynt Audry / a graundmother to Werburge
 Of noble parentage / is comen certayne
 Of two realmes descendynge / lynyally and playne
 By her father / from the realme of eest Englande
 And by her mother / from Northumberlande.

Her father saynt Anna / as sayth myne auctour
 Was kyng of the eest parte / sone to Egnicius
 Whiche Anna was maryed / with moche honour
 To Hereswith / doughter to kyng Herericus
 And syster to saynt Hylde / the byrgyn gracyous
 To whome saynt Edwyn / the glorpyous marty
 Kyng of Northumberlande / was great graundfather.

This sayd kyng Anna / lyued a longe space
 In welthe / worshyp / honour / and prosperyte
 With his quene Hereswith / by synghuler grace
 Obseruyng Justyce / pacynce / and equitye

Kepte the preceptes / of god almyghte
Mercyfull and lyberall / to the poore in payne
Whiche kynge by Penda / was murdered and slayne.

As the ryuer passeth / oftetymes the heed fountayne
The lytell grasse or ympe / transcendeth the tree
Lyke wyse theyr chyldren / encreased certayne
In mekenes / pacence / and perfyte charyte
Aboue theyr parentes / in vertue and benygnyte
So that theyr name / lynage / and hye estate
By them was magnifyed / prayfed and decorate.

Kynge Anna and Herewith / had a noble yssue
Syre goodly chyldren / pleasaunt to beholde
None sayre in this lande / myndyng all vertue
And to all good maners / dysposed manyfolde
yet was theyr saynes / not equall to be tolde
To theyr deuocyon / and synguler goodnes
Whose names expessed / ben afore doubteles.

Serburge the eldest / of the systers all
Instructe by her parentes / in vertuous dyscyplyne
folowyng thei counsell / in herte full specyall
Prepared her soule / after theyr doctryne
for aboue the age / of so yonge a femynyne
So that euery day / by grace and wyldome
In her dyd growe / some plant of deuocyon.

In all this realme / dylated was her fame
That whan she approached / vnto lawfull auge
Prynces / dukes / erles / herynge of her name
Desyred to haue Serburge / in maryage
Merburge.

g.iii.

And busily laboured / vnto her parentage
This mayd was maryed / with honour full excellent
Vnto Ercombert / the noble kynge of Kent.

To whome kynge Ethelbryct / graundfather was
The fyrst chrysten kynge / of Saxons and chefe floure
Baptysed by saynt Austyn / thurgh heuently grace
He was to holy chyrche / a specyall benefactour
Monasteryes and pyopes / fouled with great honoure
Kynge Cadwalde his sone / exemple of hym toke
Whiche was father to Ercombert / as sayth my boke.

This lady Serburge / cymfulsed with grace
After her desyre / and vertuous entent
Had leuer the monastery / than the sayre palace
The chyrche to vsyte / than with maryage be lent
But to her parentes / she was euer obedyent
Followinge theyr counseyll / and of her frendes dere
In lawfull maryage / toke the sayd kynge her fere.

A noble generacyon / she hadde by the kynge
Egbyct and Lothary / two prynces prepotent
And two holy daughters / in vertue shynynge
Ermenylde and Erhengode / by lypall descent
This Ermenylde maryed / with honour equyualent
Vnto kynge Aulfer / had a royall yssue
The glourious Werburge / replete with vertue.

Her syster Erhengode / refused utterly
Honours / worshyp / and worldly possessyon
Ryches / maryage / and pleasures transytory
Went vnto fraunce / with humble deuocyon

At the Cytee of Burges / entred relygyon
Where Ethelberge her aunt / was ruler and abbesse
Togyder they lyued / in perfyte holynesse.

This honorable Serburge / and blessed matrone
Refusynge worldly honours / and solemnyte
Preferred mekenesse / and perfyte deuocyon
Above all ryches / power and dygnyte
Auoyned ambycyon / obserued humylyte
Upon poore people / euer had compassyon
And them releued / with due mynystracyon.

She made her palace / many tymes an hospytall
Her pryuate cubyle / a deuoute oratory
As a kynde mother amiable / in courte and in hall
Mekely fulfylled / the seuen werkes of mercy
Oft tymes in the chyrche / selde amonge compayny
yet euer whan she myght / haue tyme and space
Magnyfied and prayled / our lorde in secrete place.

She instructe her husbände / in ghosly vertu
To great holynesse / and synguler perfeccyon
So by her counseyll / with the grace of Ihesu
Frome infydelyte / purged was that regyon
Destroyed they? ydolles / they? sectes euerychone
Restauered temples / vnto chrystes honour
founded monasteryes / by her cost and labour.

The kynge by her mocyon / commaunded straitly
All his people and subiectes / vpon sharpe correccyon
To obserue prayer / and penaunce deuoutely
And truly for to fast / the holy tyme of Lenton
Werburge. g.iiii.

The archbysshop Theodorus / and fathers of relygion
Consyderynge her pacyence / and benygnyte
Reioyled in her dedes / and prayled the trynyte.

When the famous Ercombert / the sayd kynge of Kent
foure & twenty yere had reigned / in honour full royall
With blessed Serburge / his quene excellent
Than he departed / frome this lyfe mortall
The quene prepared / the obsequyes funerall
With great lamentacyon / and great royalte
As was conuenient / for his state and degre.

After that Serburge / refused worldely pleasure
Entred relygion / professed chastyte
At Shepay monastery / in Kent full sure
Buryld at her cost / full honorable
After electe Abbesse / and ruler of that compaignye
To whome she was / a myrrour of mekenes
And exemple of vertue / and proued holynes.

As she was occupped / in medytacyon
An heuenly messanger / to her was sent
Shewynge how for synne / and transgressyon
Englande shulde suffer / great punysment
And be subdued / with greuous torment
Wherefore she lefte / in good rule that place
And dyd electe to them / an other abbace.

Serburge toke lycence / of her sytters all
Commendynge them / vnto the trynyte
And so departed / fro her chyldren spyrityuall
With labour attayned / to the hous of Elpe

There to be subiecte / to Her syfter Audye
And to her doctryne / apply her entent
Unto relygion / euer founde obedyent.

Saynt Audye was gladd / of her systers compnye
In lyke maner / were all the hole congregacyon
With mythes and solace / in soule reioysyng
To haue the presence / of so worthy a persone
There lyued togyder / in perfyte deuocyon
Tyll blessed Audye / frome this lyfe mortall
Departed was / to the lyfe eternall.

After whose buryall / Serburge was electe
To be abbess and ruler / ouer that couent
Whiche to all vertue / her mynde dyd erecte
And the .xvi. yere after / with labours dyligent
She translate saynt Audye / that noble president
Beynge hole incorrupte / also substancyall
In body and in besture / by grace supernall.

¶ Now saynt Ermenylde after the dethe of kynge Aul
fer her husbade was made a nonne at Ely / vnder her mo
ther saynt Serburge abbess / and Werburge her de
uoute doughter. Ca.xx.

¶ Of Mercys the kynge / wha the foresayd Aulfere
Had reigned in honour / worshyp and royalte
With saynt Ermenylde his quene / fully .xvii. yere
Unto euerlastyng blyss / departed than he
And buryed was / with moche solemnyte
In Lycheselde chyrche / after hym there dyd succede
Into the kyngdome / his brother Ethelrede.

The quene for her husbande / made great lamentacyon
Dolefully lamentynge / nyght and day his departure
As nature enuyred / enduryng a longe season
Remayned in wydohode / and mournynge besture
yet after all heuynesse / penaunce / and dysconfyture
She reioysed in soule / to be at lyberte
Entendynge relyggon / by grace of the trynityte.

Soone she departed / to the hous of Ely
Refusynge this worlde / pleasures possessyon
Instauntly requyred / with perfyte humylyte
To be a moyne / accepte in relyggon
Gladde was the abbelle / of her conuertyon
And thanked our lord / of his specyall grace
So dyd all the systers / within the sayd place.

Her naturall mother / blessed Serburge
That tyme was lady / and chefe presydent
There was professed / her doughter Werburge
An exemple of mekenes / to all the couent
Ermenylde thanked god / and was obedyent
To her mother Serburge / a myrrour of vertu
Also to her doughter / the spouses of Ihesu.

It passeth mannes reason / playnly to expresse
Her vertuous lyfe / and ghostly conuersacyon
In prayer / penaunce / and proued mekenesse
In perfyte obedyence / and synyguler deuocyon
In bygyls / abstynence / and in hysse perfeccyon
The cotydyane labours / her body to chastyce
That her soule may be / to god true sacryfyce.

By cause that Werburge / in order was senpoure
Her mother Ermenylde / gaue her the sufferaynte
Preferrynge her doughter / with mekenes and honour
But yet her doughter / of a naturall amyte
Preferred her mother / with humble senpoyte
And so bytwene them / was a swete contencion
Wheder shulde more subiecte be / to other in relygion.

Afore whan Ermenylde / was vnder maryage
Unto holy matrones / she was comparable
Sara / Rebecca / Rachell / and Sybell sage
And saynt Elyzabeth / with other mo honorable
Now in relygion / she is moost notable
Knownen by her vertues / and sadde dysposicion
That vnder matrimony / was her intencion.

Ermenylde subdued / by synguler deuyne grace
All fragyll mocions / and sensualyte
Lyke maner as Judyth / Diofernes slayne hase
She mortyfyed all pleasures / lustes and bolupte
Lykewyse as Jaell / dyd the prynce Sylare
A duches of vertue / as whylom was Delbora
Used the oratory / in prayer as dyd Anna.

After the departure / and wofull buryall
Of Serburge her mother / abbess and lady
Her doughter Ermenylde / the blessed monyall
Was chosen abbess / and ruler of the Quene
As sheweth dan Wyllyam / of Malysbury
How fyrst was Audry / than Serburge her syster
Afterwarde was abbess / Ermenylde her doughter.

The lyfe of Ermenylde / was euer vertuous
Pleasaunt to god / and her syfters euerychone
In the syght of god / her dethe was precyous
Playnly notyfied / by her conuersacyon
She vertuously gouerned / her congregacyon
Frome this lyfe departed / to eternall glory
As sayth her legende / the Idus of February.

And buryed was / with moche lamentacyon
In the holy monastery / and house of Ely
Amonge her parentage / and congregacyon
Where she is hymned / with her aunt saynt Audrey
And with her mother / saynt Serburge ryche
For whome our sauyour / of his specyall grace
She weth dayly myracles / in that sayd place.

One of the myracles / we shall now rehers
Our lord for her shewed / at Ely abbay
After her translacyon / the story dothe expres
It fortunied in Whytson weke / vpon a thursday
An Englysshman was bounden / in wofull aray
Fetered with yrons / bothe on handes and fete
Wrongfully accused / as ye may all wete.

By instaunt request / he gate hym lycence
To vlyte the tombe / of saynt Ermenylde
Whome he requyred / with humble reuerence
And meke petcyon / frome the herte full myde
To be deliuered / and fully reconcylde
Whose humble desyre / and synguler supplicacyon
Was fully graunted / to his consolacyon.

At this tyme / whan this holy man was prayenge
 Whan the Deken redde the holy gospell
 By meane of Ermenylde / to our lord and kyng
 Frome his handes and fete / the yrons done fell
 By grace aboue nature / merueylously to tell
 That the sayd yrons / insyght of all the bretherne
 Sprang by sodenly / and lyght vpon the aulter.

¶ Aliud miraculum.

An other myracle / declare now may we
 Done at the sayd Ely / by this holy matrone
 In presence of the pryor / and all the fraternyte
 Whiche pryor of this mater / had best notycon
 Ascole mayster of Innocentes / after the custome
 Gaue lyfence / vpon saynt Ermenyldes day
 To all his chyldren / to sport them in play.

Whan the feest / and solempnyte was done
 The yonge tender chyldren / wanton and neckygent
 Dedyngge theyr mayster / for fere of correccyon
 To the holy shyrne / they assembled full dylygent
 Crustyngge therby of pardon / after theyr entent
 Desyred theyr mayster / for saynt Ermenyldes sake
 To pardon theyr trespas / and no dyspleasure take.

The mayster fulfilled / with hastynes and euny
 Toke them frome the tombe / with great indygnacyon
 Withouth dyscrecyon / punysshed them greuouly
 Gyuyng no honour / to the saynt ne deuocyon
 Rebuked them sore / sayenge with insultacyon
 Crowe ye to be spared / from punysshment this day
 For saynt Ermenyldes sake / nay nay do way.

After all this done / the nexte nyght folowynge
Whan the sayd mayster / to his bedde was gone
His great unkyndenes / saynt Ermenylde remembrynge
Rewarnd hym Justly / after his guerdon
His handes and his fete / prompte to persecucion
Were sodenly smytten / made lame / contracte also
No power had to ryse / to moeue nor to go.

This todayne punysshement / langour / confusyon
Clered hym greuously in all his body
Moost terryble of all / of helthe desperacyon
Inwardly hym troubled / with paynes horryble
But yet by grace / he thought best remedy
Sende for his chyldren / vpon the other day
Humble asked them pardon / in a wofull aray.

Desyrynge his scolers / for loue and charyte
To cary hym moost carefull / to her sepulture
To requyre for hym grace / helthe and prosperyte
Of god and saynt Ermenylde / with all theyr cure
They toke hym tenderly / ye may me leue full sure
Amonge them all / with mynde dylgent
And brought to the chyrche / this wretched impotent.

They prayed for hym / to our blessed sauyour
And to saynt Ermenylde / a longe tyme and space
Knelynge on theyr knees / wepyng full sore
In prayer and psalmody / for his helthe and solace
And so contynuyng / by our lordes great grace
He that afore was lame / bothe on fete and hande
Restored to helthe / departed hole and sounde.

T How kyng Ethelrede seynge the holy conuersacyon
of Werburge his nece / made her lady and abbesse at We
don / Trentam / and Humberg. And by her counseill and
exsample was made moke at Bardeney abbay. Ca. xxi.

T He famous prynce / and foresayd Ethelrede
Brother to kyng Aulfer / as lawfull enherytour
To the sayd kyngedome / dyd nexte hym succede
Electe of his peeres / with worship and honour
Permytted by his chyrche / to be theyr gouernour
Becaus prynce Kenrede / his brother sone
Was yonge and not able / to rule his kyngdome.

This sayd kyng Ethelrede / clerely consyderynge
With due cymmstaunce / the hye perfeccyon
Of Werburge his nece / and vertuous lyuynge
Her great holynesse / and ghosly conuersacyon
Dayly encreasyng / with feruent deuocyon
The excellent fame / and myracles full ryght
Shewed by our sauyour / bothe day and nyght.

These good examplers / grounded in vertu
Moued kyng Ethelrede / in soule and in mynde
And clerely conuerted / throwe the grace of Ihesu
To despyle this worlde / wretched and blynde
Pryncypally by grace / wyten as we fynde
For her great goodnes / and bertues excellent
He made her lady / ruler / and presydent.

Ouer all the nonnes / of euery monastery
Within his realme / to gouerne and to guyde
To instructe and informe / and to exemplyfy

To encrese deuocyon / bpon euery syde
Vertue to exalte / to subdue byce and pryde
That holy relygion / pleasaunt to chryst Ihesu
A yght dayly encrese / frome vertu to vertu.

Also he gaue Werburge / great possessyon
Landes / and rentes / ryches withall
To edify and repayre / places of relygion
After her desyre / with fauour specyall
Wherwith she buyded / famous memoryall
Two fayre monasteryes / Trentam and Dunbury
Possessed with rentes / landes / and lyberte.

Also by sufferaunce / of the sayd kyng truly
She translate the kynges maner of Medon
Whiche was in Hamptonstyre / into a monastery
Of holy women / obseruynge relygion
Suffyciently endowed / with lybertes / possessyon
Of whiche sayd places / she had the gouernaunce
As worthy maystres / all vertu to auaunce.

The yere of grace / fyre hundredeth foure score and nyen
As sheweth myne auctour / a Bryton Giraldus
Kyng Etheled / myndynge moost the blyss of heuen
Edyfied a collage chyrche / notable and famous
In the subbarbes of Chester / pleasaunt and beauteous
In the honour of god / and the Baptyst saynt Iohan
With helpe of bysshop Wulfryce / and good exortacyon.

Also at the humble / and synguler supplicacyon
Of blessed Egwyn / bysshop of worcestur
This kyng gaue a place / for a fundacyon

To buyde a monastery / to relygyous brethur
At Eufam vpon Auen / for heuenly tresur
With a large precynct / to compas all the abbay
More quyetly to serue / our saupour nyght and day.

After this tyme / Ethelrede the kynge
By his counseyll marped / a beaufull lady
Called quene Mstryde / a woman of good luyng
Borne in the North parte / doughter to kynge Mwy
To whome saynt Mwalde / was hndle truly
The yssue betwene them / after to succede
Was a noble prynce / nomynate Colrede.

Agaynst his enemyes / the kynge gate byctory
fortunate in batayle / sore oppressed Kent
In all this regyon / famous was his chyualry
Namely he subdued / at the water of Trent
Egryde of Northumberlande / a kynge auncyent
His brother in lawe / whan Egryde agaynst reason
Entred his landes / by subtyll intrusyon.

But after that Mstryde / his quene was slayne
By people of the North parte / moost cruelly
The kynge frome that tyme / by grace certayne
Chaunged his maners / and luyng dayly
Frome temporall cures / and busynesse worldly
To ghosly werkes / and contemplacyon
Seking for heuen / with pure deuocyon.

Specyally he folowed / saynt Werburge counsell
Mynge hym after / her swete ghosly doctryne
The clere examplis / as we afore dyd tell
Werburge.

h.i.

Mooued his conscience / to ghostly dyscypline
With suche contricyon / by specyall grace deuynne
That all bayne pleasures / and honouris transytory
Were clere expulled / and put out of memory.

This kynge refused / his septré and crowne
Clothes of Tythew / and purpull full royall
With ryches / lybertes / pleasures / posselcion
For the loue of Ihesu / in herte pryncypall
And for the meryte / of his soule helthe withall
So whan he had reygned / nyne and twenty yere
He chaunged his habyte / sayth the story clere.

At a relyggyous place / nomynate Bardenay
In Lyncolne shyre / vnder his domynyon
Singular byloued / of hym alway
Desyred the habyte / with meke supplicacyon
And was receyued / professynge relyggon
Euer after to obserue / the essencys the
Obedyence / chastyte / and wylfull pouerte.

He assygned his crowne / and temporall dygnyte
Unto pryncé Henrede / his brother sone
As true enherytour / to haue regalyte
For in pure obedynce / prayer and medytacyon
Ethelrede encrested / with feruent deuocyon
And as declareth / wylliam of Malurysbury
After was made abbot / of the sayd monastery.

¶ The holy conuersacyon of kynge Henred brother to
saint Werburge / a how he refused his crowne / and was
made monke at Rome / a ther departed a holy cōfessour.
Ca. xxi.

So whan kynge Etheldrede / by heuently grace
At Bardenay abbay / professed relygion
Than prynce Kenrede / his successor was
And toke the Empyre / the septré and the crowne
With moche worthyp / royalte / and renowne
As nexte of inherytaunce / by law naturall
To be kynge of Mercens / by dyscent lynyall.

This noble kynge Kenrede / replete with vertu
Brother to Werburge / obserued truly
The commaundmentes of god / & his lawes moost tru
Obedyent to our sauyour / and lorde almyghty
Loued holy chyrche / moost tenderly
Aynyfired Justyce / to his subiectes all
Mercyfull to the poore / pyteous and lyberall.

In all his realme / was no dyuersyte
Malyce was subdued / rancour and debate
Vertue encreased / true loue and charyte
Enuy was exyled / and all pryuy hate
Thefte / murthur / robbery / were founde at no gate
True men myght lyue / without beynyon
Pollers / promoters / had no donynacyon.

He gaue to our sauyour / and bysshop Egiwyn
For ghosly meryte / with moche honoure
Of tenementes and landes / playnely to determyne
Within worceterstyre .iiii. score and foure
To maynteyne the monastery / spoken of before
Euesham vpon Auen / byfore lawfull wytnes
As the legende of Egiwyn / truly dothe expres.

Werburge.

h.ii.

To the courte of Rome / kyng Henred went
So dyd Alfa kyng / of the east Saxons
Also bysshop Egwyn / by one assent
Deuoutly to bysyt / all the hole stacyons
Of the cytee of Rome / with humble supplicacyons
Thankyng our lorde / of his mercy
Hath them preserued / and all theyr company.

This holy bysshop / and kyng Henrede
Offered to our holy father / pope boneface
With mekenes deuocyon / for ghostly mede
Afore his collage / wytnes in that case
The foresayd monastery / and relygyous place
Frome that day euer after / to be clerely exempte
To the popes holynes / immediatly obedyent.

Whan they had optayned / perfyte expedycon
Of all theyr bulles / after theyr entent
They toke lycence / and had the popes beneson
And towarde Englade / retourned and went
Praylyng our lorde / with herte and loue feruent
For theyr good spede / and prosperous Journey
Preserued in good helthe / all to theyr countray.

After all this done / Henrede the sayd kyng
Commaunded to be had / a counseyll generall
By letters myssyue / his peeres and lordes cytyng
Shortly to be present / with hym one and all
As well the spyrytualte / as the temporal
The Seyn was kepte / at a place called Alue
And thyder assembled / his prelates of degre.

Berthunaldus / the archebysshop of Canturbury
The archbysshop of yorke / called Wylfryde
With bysshops / suffreganes / archdekenis many
Dukes / erles / barons / bpon euery tyde
Knyghtes / esquyers / and comunes that tyde
Were redy to knowe / the kynges mynde and pleasure
Well ordred in place / and scyence kepte sure.

This glorious Kenrede / crowned with golde
Clothed in purpall / rose bp fro his place
After due salutacyon / the cause mekely he tolde
Why he for them sende / and wherfore it was
That they shulde testyfy / with hym in this case
That landes he gaue / towarde the fundacyon
Of the sayd monastery / with grete deuocyon.

And how for that abbay / he went to Rome
And made the place subiecte / immediatly
To our father boniface / and gate an exempcyon
For euer to remayne / to the sayd monastery
With pardons and pryuyleges / there redde openly
And many other benefytes / of great commodyte
Wryten in theyr grauntes / who lyst them to se.

Requyringe the lordes / spyrytuall and temporall
To graunte to the same / with good entent
And it to confyrme / and roborate specyall
With charters and dedes / and seales patent
To whose petycyon / they dyd all consent
Made confyrmacions / and grauntes them amonge
With a terryble sentence / who dothe the place wronge.

Werburge.

h.iii.

Kynge Kenrede confyderynge / the great holynes
Of his noble parentes / his vncles euerychone
They? royall progeny / the sufferaunt goodnes
From this lyfe transytory / to heuen agone
Namely the vertue / and seruent deuocyon
Of his syster Werburge / and his aunes all
Moued his mynde / to seke for lyfe eternall.

And as saynt Bede sayth / whan this noble kynge
Had regned fyue yere / in great prosperyte
He forsoke this worlde / and chaunged his lyuynge
Refusynge his crowne / sceptre / and dygnyte
All bayne honours / ryches and regalyte
And made his vncles sone / prynce Coelrede
To take his empyre / after hym to succede.

So with all gentylnes / and humylyte
The kynge of his subiectes / toke leue speycall
Commendynge his people / to the trynitye
Them to conserue / spyrityuall and temporall
Of his departure / dolorous were they all
Thus for the loue / of our sayoure
He refused this worlde / pleasures and honour.

And went to Rome agayne / the yere of grace
Seuen hundredeth and eyght / by full computacyon
Wyltynge the stacyons / frome place to place
There was professed / to saynt Benettes relygion
Used bygylls / fastynges / prayer / medytacyon
Where this holy monke / frome this lyfe transytory
With vertu departed / to eternall glory.

Of y^r feruent & ghosly deuocyon of saynt Werburge
& vertuons gouernance of her places / & of y^r great humi-
lite she bled to her sisters / & al other creatures. Ca.xiii.

This venerable Werburge / & moynes gracyous
for her great vertue / and perfyte holynesse
Electe to be gouernour / ouer the nonnes relygeous
By her vnclc kynge Ethelrede / of his goodnesse
ouer dyuers monasteryes (as is sayd) expresse
Was consecrate abbesse / and lady gracyous
By the byshop of Lycheselde / nomynat Serwulfus.

And thus she departed / fro the hous of Ely
Wherin she bled / heuently medytacron
With lycence optayned / in mynde sad and heuy
So were the systers / and all the congregacyon
Of her departure / knowynge her conuersacyon
But as wolde charyte / they had great gladnes
Knowynge by her vertue / relyggon to encres.

The spoules of Ihesu / and flour of benygnyte
Consyderynge her selfe / a lady and presydent
Ordered her monasteryes : ryght well and wysele
Receyued in systers / chaste / humble / obedyent
ouer them made rulers / vertuons / and payent
Her subiectes to instructe / and counseyll day and nyght
Vertue to exalte / and vyce depyue aryght.

This noble abbesse / remembrynge her ditty
What charge it is / to rule a congregacyon
Humble requyred the grace of god almyghty
And dyligently prepared / to supple her rowme.

Pryncypally she gaue / to them euerychone
Perfyte exsample / of vertue in her dede
With vertuous doctryne / the same to procede.

A myrrour of mekenesse / she was to them all
A floure of chastyte / and well of clennes
The fruyte of obedyence / in her was specyall
Refusynge bayne pleasures / honours and ryches
Content with lytell / an exsample of lowlynnes
As dothe belonge / vnto wyllfull pouerte
Wyde ha no resydence / but all humylyte.

She was a mynyster / rather than a maystres
Her great preemynence / caused no presumption
She was a handmayd / rather than a pryores
Seruyng her systers / with humble subieccion
Subduynge her body / to penaunce and afflyccion
Subiecte to the soule / as reason wolde shulde be
A true sacryfice / offered to the trynityte.

It was no merueyll / tho all her couent
Under suche a ruler / encreased in vertu
Seynge her exsample / afore them dayly present
Euer augmentynge / throue the helpe of Ihesu
Worldly desyres / she clerely dyd subdue
She neuer ware lynon / by day or by nyght
All ryche bayne vestures / she set by them but lyght.

In prayer medytacyon / the tyme she dyspent
Proued : for euery nyght / longe afore matyns
She wolde wyple / at an houre conuenient
And deuoutely say / afore our lordes presens

**Dauid spalter holly knelynge / with great reuerence
O that her syfters / came to the oratory
To say prayne seruyte / fyndyng her all redy.**

**At after matyns / she vfed contemplacon
Contynually abydyng / vnto the day lycht
Prostrate on the grounde / or knelyng in deuocyon
Weppynge full tenderly / with teeres downeryght
Many holy praysons / she sayd day and nyght
Piteous / mercyable / and full of charyte
To the poore people / in theyr necessitye.**

**This lady obserued / suche sharpe abstinence
That one dayly repast / wolde her well suffice
Delycate dyllhe meates / were put out of her presence
So nature were content / in moost humble wyte
The Worde of god / was moost delycate seruyse
Fyndyng moche more / the soule to satisfye
Than please and content / her enemy the body.**

**These sayd exemples / with many other mo
Pleasaunte vnto Ihesu / she taught her couent
Them to preserue / frome theyr mortall fo
By synguler bertue / grace to augment
Her precepte and luyng / were euer correspondent
She neuer commaunded syfter / do any thyng
But it was fulfilled / in her owne doyng.**

**She exorted her chyldren / euer to deuocyon
With manyfolde doctrynes / ydlenes to excheue
Lyke a tender mother / had pyte and compassion
She dayly fedde them / and nourysshed in all bertue
Merburge. i.i.**

And delygently prayed / our sauour Ihesu
Them to preserue / of his infynyte grace
Frome peryll of perthyng / in blyss to se his face.

Also the .xii. degrees / of humylyte
Pacence / quyetnes / and great perfeccyon
Were well obserued / with true loue and charyte
Amonge her systers / the hole congregacyon
And the thre essencys / of relygion
Wylfull pouerte / chastyte / and obedyence
were truly fulfilled / proued by the consequence.

As for a pastyme / amonge her systers all
She caused to be redde / auowdyng ydlenesse
The swete legendary / for a memoryall
And Citas patrum / the wyng great swetenesse
With other narracyons / of grace and goodnesse
Oft tymes to her couent / she had a comyn sayenge
Please god and loue hym / and doubte ye nothyng.

All reders excuse me / tho I can not expresse
For lacke of lernyng / the vertues morall
The hye perfeccyon / and proued holynesse
Of this pure byggen / and sanctymonyall
Wherwith was decorate / her lyfe monestycall
Manyfest With myracles / by myrte of her mekenesse
As the true hystory / playnly dothe expresse.

The worthy myracles / of this byggen pure
Oylated were / thugh all this regyon
By deuynne sufferance / aboue nature
Profytable / to euery chrysten synguler persone

In sekeneſſe / trouble / payne or beracyon
Of her they haue refuge / helpe / and ſocoure
By her merytes / and prayer / that euery honour.

Her merytes were / moche more commendable
Than were her myracles / manyfest and playne
For why by her merytes / famous and notable
Sygnes and myracles / were ſhewed full playne
In the houſe of Ely / by the grace of our ſufferayne
And in euery place / where ſhe kepte reſydence
Of whome parte ſolowen / in this rude ſentence.

¶ How at Wledon wylde gees were pyyned by her com
maundment / & alſo releſhed & put at lyberte. Ca.xxiiii.

This holy byrgyn / whan ſhe dwelled at Wledon
In Northamptonſhyr / with a deuoute couent
Whiche place ſomtyme / was the kynges manſyon
Translated to an abbay / by her commaundment
A myracle was done / by this noble preſdent
As the true legende / playnly dothe vs ſay
And all the inhabytauntes / vnto this preſent day.

A great multytude / ſomtyme of wylde gees
Comunely called Gauntes / made a great deſcrypcyon
Upon her landes / paſtures / waters / and feldeſ
Deuourynge the cornes / and fruytes of Wledon
Greuous to her ſubiectes / within that poſſeſſyon
The people coude fynde / no ſufficyent remedy.
But ſhe wed theyr complainte / to Werburge theyr lady.

¶ Whan Werburge had herde / this greuous complainne
Werburge. l.ii.

How the cornes were wasted / y^e tenants hurte therby
Her herte was moeued / with charyte than certayne
To saue her fruytes / and helpe her company
Wherefore she commaunded a seruaunt go hastily
To dyue those wyde gees / & bynge home to her place
There to be pynned / and punyshted for theyr trespase.

The messenger merueyled / and mused in his mynde
Of this straunge message / stode styll in a study
Knowynge it well / it passed counseil of kynde
Wyde gees for to pynne / by any mannes polycy
Syth nature hath ordeyned / suche bydes to fly
Supposynge his lady / had ben unreasonable
Commaundyng to do / a thyng vnpossyble.

With wordes of conforste / she sayd to hym agayne
Go in my name / do my commaundment
The seruaunt went forth / thynkyng all but bayne
Unto the foldes / where the bydes were lent
And sayd his message / with mynde and good entent
My lady commaundes you / bydes euerychone
Afore me to go / vnto her proper mansyone.

A merueylous thyng / transcendynge nature
Unto his wordes / the gees were obedyent
Not one departed / fro thens ye may besure
Of all the nombre / that there were present
Towarde her place / afore hym they went
Meekely / as yf they had reason naturall
Unto her presence / he brought the gauntes all.

Wredfully darynge / comen now they be

They wynges traylynge / entred into the hall
for great confusyon / after they kynde and propre
mournyng in theyr maner / abydyng one and all
Her wyll and Judgmen / with mercy specyall
Lamentynge all nyght / there in captiuite
Tyll the morowe after / withouten lyberte.

All that same nyght / Werburge dyd contynue
In deuoute prayers / and ympnes celestyall
After her olde custome / vsed in all vertue
In the mornynge after / the bydes that were thall
With hye voyces (as yf it were) on her dyd call
for grace and pardon / of theyr offence
And of departure / to haue fre lycence.

Chan the full pyteous / to euery creature
Upon these bydes haupnge compassyon
Delyuered them / frome all daunger and cure
frely to departe / vnder this condycyon
That none of them / vpon the lordshyp of Medon
Shulde make destruccyon / nor lyght by any way
On comes or fruytes / neuer after that day.

Neuertheles a seruaunt / one of the gees dyd take
And pryuely hydde it / agaynst iustyce and ryght
Unknowynge to Werburge / suche byby to make
The bydes departed / moost glad to take theyr flyght
from theyr tender Judge / but whan they saue in syght
One of theyr felawes / taken frome theyr company
The sayd great nombre / of gees retourned hastely.

They flewe ouer / this blessed byrgyns hall
Werburge.

i.iii.

Mourninge and waylynge / after they entent
And wolde not departe / but fast on her dyd call.
yet they durst not lyght / for drede of her comaundment
But in theyr maner & kynde they sayd / o swete president
Why suffer ye suche wyckednes / done for to be
Anendes our felawe / agaynst all ryght and charyte.

Merburge went fyrst / to knowe wherfore and why
These byrdes retourned / so hastily certayne
By grace she perceyued / the cause of it truly
And tryed out the truthe / of all the mater playne
She restaured the byrde / to his selythyp agayne
And gaue them a lesson / or they went her fro
How they shulde prayse / theyr maker and sufferayne
Sayenge (benedicite volucres celi domino)

But as Wyllyam Malurysbury / sheweth expresse
The goos that was taken / and stolen afore away
Was rosted and eten / the same nyght doubtlesse
So whan it was asked / for vpon the other day
The bare bones were brough / after this lady beray
And there by the vertue / of her benedyccion
The byrde was restaured / and flew away full soone.

Certaynly frome that tyme / vnto this present day
As all the people knowe / dwellynge about Wedon
The foresayd wylde gees / attempten by no way
To hurte theyr fruytes / ne lyght in that possession
No merueyll it is / remembrynge the deuocyon
And true loue she had / to god omnyppotent
For vnto vertue / all thyng is obedyent.

¶ Now a tyrant without pyte punyſhyng an Inno-
cent was punyſhed / & after made hole. Ca. xxv.

Further to declare / the pacyence and humylyte
And the ſynguler grace / grounded in this abbas
As in the true legende / playnly ye may ſe
We ſhall parte rehers / to augment your ſolas
Werburge had a ſeruaunte / whiche named was
Alnotus a man / of meke conuerſacion
Knownen by his merytes / after due probacion.

Also a baylyſe ſhe had / a cruell tyrant
Whiche pyteouſly punyſhed / without reaſon
And wounded greuouſly / Alnot her ſeruaunt
Without any greuaunce / at the place of Medon
Werburge for pyte / and great compaſſyon
Afore this captyſe / kneled on her knee
Prayenge hym to ceaſe / for loue of the trynnyte.

Sayenge why does thou punyſhe / this innocent
Causeles without mercy / whiche I byleue playne
Is more acceptable / to our lorde omnypotent
Than many other be / for his mekenelle certayne
The baylyſe at her prayer / wolde not refrayne
But punyſhed hym ſyll / in his fury and pryde
Tyll the vengauce of god / fell on hym that tyde.

Incontynente his heed / his necke / and his face
Were tourned backwarde / lyke a perſone monſtruous
Contrary to nature / for his great trespae
Crucpate with ſorowe / and peynes hyduous
Contynually encreaſynge / to beholde pyteous
Werburge. i.iiii.

At the last remembered / of the best remedy
Fell prostrate to the fete / of Werburge his lady.

And cryed vpon her / with wofull chere
Weeping / lamentynge / his great iniquyte
O my louely lady / and maystres moost dere
Helpe me swete abbess / in this necessyte
I haue offended god / now pray for me
And I wyll neuer / endurynge all my lyfe
Dysplease no more / man / mayde / ne wyfe.

When Werburge consydered / his great contricyon
His woofull herte / and lamentable crye
Upon hym she had / tender compassyon
Beholdynge his greuaunce / and tender agony
Good brother she sayd / who so wyll haue mercy
Must be mercycable / as in prouerbe wyten is
Who is without mercy / of mercy shall mys.

Call vnto mynde / thy owne wyched dede
In punysshynge this poore man / without offence
To se his punysshment / my herte sore dyd blede
I kneeled afore thy fete / desyringe indulgence
Thou toke no regarde / to my prayer ne presence
Wherefore the Justyce / of god almyghty
Upon the is fallen / for thy synne todayly.

When she had ended / her ghostly exortacyon
Perceyvinge hym penytent / with great humylte
Gladde to amende / bye and transgressyon
Anone vnto prayer / she went with charyte
Optyeined forgyuenesse / of the blessed trynityte

His fynnamy / restaured to his kynde agayne
Bothe bodily and ghostly / cured was certayne.

This foresayd Alnotus / by singular grace
Refused this worlde / pleasures and banys
Went into wyldernesse / and machoryte was
Whome theues martyred / to heuen blysse went he
At Stow besyde Bukbyrge / buried was trule
For whome our lorde / of his infynyte goodnes
Shewed many myracles / affyrmyng his holynes.

¶ How dyuers prynces solowynge sensualityte inten-
dyng to violate this byrgyn bi power / bi myracle were
put to confusyon. Ca. xxvi.

Another sygne was shewed / by the kyng of blys
Of a wanton pryncce / solowynge sensualityte
And his fragyll appetyte / in doyng amys
Entendynge by vyolence / power / and auctoryte
To depyue Werburge / of her byrgynyte
Escped a season / to fulfyll his entent
Whan she was solytary / and no man there present.

By force than he began / this mayd to assaile
But she trustynge in god / to be her protectour
Escapyng his presence / cast her sacrat bayle
For lyghtnesse and ease / to fle from the traytour
The sonne beame receyued it / whiche haged that houre
Whiche myracle sene / the pryncce fledde away
The byrgyn was preserued / by grace that day.

¶ Another myracle / was done in Kent

In the byllage of Hoo / yet full memorous
A sensuall prynce / of wycked consent
Purposed to maculate / this bygyn glayous
Consyderynge her persone / so fayre and beauteous
Carped the season / to fynde her solytary
By power to oppresse / this gracyous lady.

When the tyme was comen / he thought conuenient
After her furpously / he ranne a fast pace
She knowynge his mynde / add vnchast entent
Seynge no remedy / by man in that place
Called to our sauoure / for his helpe and grace
Sayenge blessed lorde / for thy endles pyte
Defende me this daye / and saue my chastyte.

And as she fledde / frome this cruell persone
She ranne for socour / to a great oke tree
By grace the sayd tree / opened that same season
Sufferynge this mayd / to haue sure and fre entree
Wherby she escaped his / wycked tyrannye
Whiche tree to this day / endurynge all the yere
By myracle is bernaunte / freshe / grene / and clere.

Of the sayd oke tree / is a famous oppynyon
That no man may entre / the sayd concaupte
In deedly synne bounden / without contrycyon
But in clene perfyte lyfe / who soeuer he be
May entre the sayd oke / with fre lyberte
And nygh to that place / a chyrche is now dedycate
In the honour of god / and werburge immaculate.

¶ Many other myracles / our blessed sauour

Shewed for this byrgyn / of his goodnes
Conforte to the people / in sekenes and langour
That to her wyll seke / in theyr dyffresse
Her excellent vertue / and great holynesse
By sygnes and myracles / were dayly manyfess
To many a creature / with peynes opprest.

The same wherof sprange / to fast aboute
Potyfyed playne / in all this regyon
The people approched / withouten doubte
To knowe her blessed / and holy conuersacyon
And of these myracles / to haue probacyon
By the syght wherof / they myght all glorify
With ioy and gladnesse / our lorde god almyghty.

There was no sekenesse / nor infyrmyte
That mankynde had / nor deracyon
But by her prayer / and humylte
Makyng for them / to our lorde intercessyon
They were restaured / to helthe and saluacyon
All by the meryte / of this byrgyn pure
A synguler refuge / vnto every creature.

To the dombe was gyuen / speche and language
To blynde theyr syght / to dese theyr herynge
To halte and lame people / helthe in every aege
By deuyne grace / and her ghosly lyuynge
The people approchynge / nygh to her in dwellynge
By callyge to her / in the name of Ihesu
Had theyr petycyon / by her synguler vertu.

Some other that were / fully possessed

With wretched spyrytes / berynge the mynde
Of with sekenes incurable / myserably greued
By her dayly prayer / aboute course of kynde
Of theyr displeases / they shulde remedy fynde
And from her departe / in soule with gladnesse
Whiche to her came / soye in peyne and wretchednes.

C How saynt Werburge gaue knowledge to her systers
of her departure & how she ordered i vertue her sayd mo
nasteryes afore her dethe. Ca.xxvii.

T His blessed abbesse / and vertuous flour
The well of clennes / and humplyte
Called to mynde / the wordes of our sauyour
Reherled by Mathewe / in his euangely
The byctory all crowne / of eterne glory
Is gyuen to them / that be redy eche houre
Wysely attendynge / whan they be sende fore.

This texte was euer / in her memoryall
Prompte alway redy / as a true spouses
To waite on her spouse / whan he wyll call
Her lampe replete / with oyle of mekenes
Synguler gyftes / she had of chyftes goodnes
Inspyred with the spyryte / of prophery
Secrete thynges to come / knowynge thereby.

She knewe the season / was hastely comynge
Of her departure / fro this lyfe mortall
Wherefore she ordred / sadly euery thyng
Within her monasteryes / and charges spyrytuall
Wyselytyng her couent / with her presence personall

Gaue knowlege to them / that soone and hastely
She shulde departe / frome this lyfe transytory.

Afore her were called / the systers of yche place
And were apoynted / who shulde succede
After to be gouernour / ruler / and abbesse
To the pleasure of god / and theyr ghostly mede
Specyally commendynge / vertue as we rede
What meryte they shall haue / of god almyghty
In spyrytuall cures / that done well theyr duty.

All other offycers / within eche monastery
Were assigned by Werburge / theyr presydent
And vnder obedyence / charged full depely
Theyr offyce to execute / vertue to augment
For the synguler profyte / of all the couent
She gaue to yche place / landes and possession
Sufficyently to serue / all the congregacyon.

When she had ordeyned / eche place in charyte
Dischargynge her conscience / chargynge them all
To obserue relygion / with perfyte humyltye
After her exemple / and doctryne pryncypall
She had perfyte knowlege / by grace supernaturall
Her body shulde rest / in the place of Hamburgens
After her departure / by deuyne prouydens.

Wherefore she commaunded / the couent of Hambury
Wysely to attende / with all theyr dyligence
Upon the ende / of her lyfe transytory
Wheresoever it be / to come with benyvolence
And incontynent take / her body with reuerence

And brynge it shortly / vnto theſe monaſtery
There to be tynplate / after her deſydey.

As it pleaſeth our lord / and celeftyall ſufferayne
To ſende to his ſeruaunte / his byſytacyon
The day was apoynted / the houre incertayne
Of her departure / frome worldly heracyon
The meſſanger of dethe / the ende of trybulacyon
Oppreſſed this lady / moost worthy fame
Ryght at her monaſtery / nomynat Trentame.

She thanked her maker / ſayenge day and nyght
Well come be the byſytacyon / of god almyghty
She called her ſyſters / preſent afore her ſyght
Her entente reherſynge / to them tenderly
Deſyrynge all them / to folowe dolygently
The lawes of god / with honour and reuerence
And to her counſeyll / to gyue fully credence.

Sayenge dere blyoued ſyſters / in our ſauour
O ſpyrytuall chyldren / my derlynges moost dere
Whiche haue refuſed / all worldly honour
To ſerue our lord / with herte and mynde clere
Suffer no ſynne / in your ſoule to apere
But waſhe it away / by bytter contrycyon
With prayer penaunce / and true confeſſyon.

And truſt ye well your true obedyence
your chaſt luyng / and wylfull pouerte
your dayly prayers / bygyls / and abſtynece
That ye haue obſerued / her vnder me
Shalbe recompensed / a thouſande folde true

When ye shalbe taken / fro this lyfe transytory
your rewarde shalbe / with immortall glory.

As for my dethe / whiche approaches nere
I drede nothyng / tho nature ferefull be
I knowe for certayne / who departeth well here
Is newe borne agayne / to Joye and felycyte
The chrysten man hath / a threholde natyurte
Fyrst of his parentes / by cours of nature
Borne to many troubles / and sorowes sure.

By the seconde byrthe / whiche is more excellent
At fonte of baptysm / we haue regeneracyon
By fayth professed / to god omnytpotent
And made the chyldren / of ghostly saluacyon
To auoyde by grace / all wyched temptacyon
To be inherytours / of Joy perpetuall
Folowynge the counseyll / of holy chyrche withall.

The thyrde byrthe / moost ferefull and to be dredde
Is when the soule / departeth fro the body
To payne or blyss / and leues the corps dedde
To tourne agayne to erthe / to wast and putryfy
In this thyrde byrthe / by callynge aserre for mercy
Our soule shall lyue in blyss / euerlastynge
Crowned with vyctory / for our chaff lyuynge.

The swete byrde closed / in a cage a longe season
Gladly entendeth / to fly at lyberte
The prysoner fettered / and cast in depe dongeon
Euer supposes / to be rydde frome capturyte
The soule of mankynde / moost dygne of durtte

Naturally desyneth / proued by reason
To be delyuered / frome bodyly pryson.

TH Of y^r ghosly exortacyon saynt Werburge made to her
syfters in her sekenesse / and how deuoutely she receyued
y^r sacramētes of holy chyrche byfore her deth. Ca.xxviii.

THe day knowen / to her by reuelacyon
Of her departure / by sygnes euydent
She sende for all / the hole congregacyon
And in presence / of all her holy couent
She called for the blessed sacrament
To whome she sayd / with wordes expresse
With wepyng teeres / and great mekenesse.

Well come my lorde / well come my kyng
Well come my sufferayne / and sauyour
Well come my conforte / and ioy euerlastyng
My trust / my treasure / my helpe and socour
Well come my maker / and my redemptour
The sone of god / moost in maieste
Withouten begynnyng / and endeles shalbe.

I beleue that thou / for all mankynde
Frome heuen descended / of thy charyte
And was incarnate / scripture dothe mynde
In the bygynall wombe / of blessed marie
And suffered dethe / to make vs all fre
Descended to hell / roole the thyde day
Ascended to heuen / and our raunson byd pay.

And I knowlege to the / with pure entent

On Shorwthursday / after thy passyon
Thy moost blessed body / in sacrament
Thou gaue to vs / for our communyon
To be our defence / and ghostly turyon
Now present here / in forme of breed
To Judge mankynde / bothe quicke and deed.

O sufferayne sauyour / replete with grace
I the beseeche / haue pyte vpon me
And in my soule / make a dwellynge place
Expulce all vyce / synne and mysery
Defende my soule / frome our aduersary
Saue and protecte me / from peynes infernall
And brynge thugh thy mercy / to ioye perpetuall

Thus with reuerence / and great humylyte
She receyued / the blessed sacrament
The seconde persone / in trynyte
In perfyte fayth / hope / and loue seruent
With great contricyon / as it was apparent
Her herte lyfte vp / towarde heuen on hye
Abdyng the wyll / of god almyghty.

She exorted / her systers euerychone
That were there present / in companye
Besyrnge them all / with supplicacyon
To remembre her / sayenge with humylyte
My systers in god / now knowe may ye
My dayes ben ferre past / comynge is the houre
Wherefore I betake you / fyrst to our sauyour.

Prayenge you tenderly / for the loue of me
Werburge. h.i.

In deuyne scrupce / loke ye contynue
Oblerynge pacence / mekenes / and chastyte
Encresynge in relygion / by the grace of Ihesu
Who so perceuers / in herte and mynde true
Under obedyence / to the extreme day
Is sure to be saued / scripture so doth say.

Also remembre / that all worldly royalte
Honour / ryches / pleasure / possessyon
If ye consyder / are but a vanyte
Nothyng assured / to trust therupon
Wherefore dyspose you / to vertue alon
Whyle ye endure / in this lyfe mortall
Tyll that ye come / to Joy perpetuall.

Secondly the sayd / systers If you pray
Kept well the order / of perfyte charyte
Neuer declynyng / fro it by no way
As ye haue taken / exemple of me
Iche loue other / and worshyp in theyr degre
So that no murmure / nor dyssemblacon
Be founde amonge / this holy congregacyon.

Be euer lowly / humble / and obedyent
With due reuerence / worshyp and honoure
Followe the mynde / of your presydent
Unto your heed / and ghostly gouernoure
Kepe well chastyte / that precyous floure
So that no thought / of sensualityte
Corrupte your mynde / to breke byrgynyte.

Se that ye vse / dyscrete temperaunce

Absteynyng frome bayne superfluyte
Se that amonge you / be founde no barypance
Kepe well the degrees / of humylyte
These and many other / examptes of charyte
She taught her couent / of synguler deuocyon
How they shoulde optayne / to hys perfeccyon.

Thyrdly she prayed / sayenge with mynde delygent
O blessed sauyour / I desyre the
Saue and defende / my hole couent
And theyr monasteryes / of thy great pyte
Frome peryll of peryshynge / and frome enmyte
That all the subiectes / of our congregacyon
May well obserue / theyr holy professyon.

And graunt me swete lord / throwe thy goodnes
Vnto so in thy name / vpon me dothe call
In langour / mysery / in payne / or sekenes
Also women with chyld / in paynes thall
May haue remedy / and helpe specyall
And people in pylson / halte / blynde / and lame
By me may magnify / thy glorious name.

Then she requyred / with humylyte
The spyrytuall sufferage / of holy vncyon
Her soule to conforthe / frome all aduersyte
She toke her leue / and kyssed them ycheon
Alas what herte / myght shewe the lamentacyon
The wepyng / waylynge / and wofull heuynes
At the departure / of theyr swete maystres.

¶ Of the departure of saynt Werburge vnto heuē at the
Werburge. k.ii.

abbay of Trentam / fro this myserable lyfe / & what lamentacyon her systers made for her dethe. Ca.xxix.

In all her infyrmte / peyne and busynesse
She bled prayer / and medytacyon
Callynge for mercy / by interyor mekenesse
With wepyng eyes / and great lamentacyon
Remembryng in herte / our lordes passyon
Commendynge her couent / vnto our sauour
To be theyr defence / ayde / and protectour.

The peynes encreased / of her infyrmte
The panges doubled / her peyne to augment
Nature decayed / vnto such debylte
That the sygnes of dethe / appered euydent
The houre approached / after all Iudgment
Wherefore all thynges / were redy preparate
As was conuenient / for so noble a state.

Her spouse Ihesus / hauryng pyte and cure
Upon his spouses / in extreme dystresse
Wolde not suffer her peyne / longer endure
But sende his angels / with great lyghtnesse
To conforthe his seruaunt / in peyne and sekenesse
To dyssolue her wo / and great penalte
And byngge by her soule / to eterne felycyte.

There derknes was tourned / all vnto lyght
Langour and trouble / vnto prosperyte
The day was gouernour / ouer the nyght
When that she passed / this lyfe transytory
Bondage and thraldome / were brought to lyberte
The tyme of Joye / and euerlastyng pleasure

Was appocheynge to Werburge / euer to endure.

A multytude of angelles / synnyng moost clere
Were redy to gyde / with humble reuerence
The soule of werburge / as truly dyd apere
And brought it to blys / vnto the hys presence
Of almyghty god / moost of magnyfyce
Clerey released / frome peynes of purgatory
To be rewarded / with euerlastyng glory.

This blessed byrgyn / glorious and pure
In stedfast fayth / hope / loue / and charyte
The thyrd day of february / ye may be sure
Expyred frome this lyfe / caduce and transytory
To eterne blyss / coronate with vitory.
Chaungynge her lyfe / myserable and thall
For infynyte ioye / and glory eternall.

With moche honour / these spyrytuall mynysters
Conueyed the soule / aboue the firmament
Passynge the seven planettes / and all the sterres
Vnto the presence / of god omnypotent
Synngynge full swetely / theyr songes eurybalent
Of pleasaunt armony / of conforste and blys
Salutynge her mekely / with wordes reuerent
Aeni dilecta : beni coronabiris.

The the Hierarches / were redy present
With heuenly melody / to receyue this monyall
The quere of byrgyns / mette her incontynent
With great solemnyte / and processyon royall
Presentynge her soule / with myrthes angelycall
To Ihesu her spouse / to whome he sayd truly
Werburge.

h.iii.

Well come dere doughter / to blyffe celestyall
Intra in gaudium : domui tui.

In meane tyme and space / this venerable body
(The soule departed) lay whyte / freyght and colde
Semyng as on slepe / she had ben verely
With swete odours fragrant / passyng manyfolde
All spyes and herbes / in erth may be tolde
The place was so pleasaunt / full of delyce
Lyke as it had ben / an erthly paradyce.

This forsayd venerable congregacyon
With wepyng teeres / and syghes lamentable
Washed the swete body / after the olde custome
And dressed the corps / with clothes honorable
Prepared all necessaryes / pleasaunt and commendable
To church she was brought / solemly in syght
With seruent deuocyon / to be watched all nyght.

And as they watched / with due mynystracyon
Ouer the sayd corps / deuoutly prayenge
They made great mournynge / and lamentacyon
Euerychone to other / for her departynge
Alas they all sayd / with wofull waylynge
Our solace / our helthe / is clere gone away
Alas for sorowe / what shall we now say.

The sterre of our consofte / is extyncte clere
The lanturne of our lyght / is taken ys fro
The floure of chastyte / is layd vpon a bere
The myrrour of mekenes / now lyeth full loo
The treasure of relyggyon / from us now is ago
Our sorowe encreased / wretchednes / and misery

Syth thou arte departed / alas what remedy :

**Our hertes ben plunged / in great wo and peyne
Our myndes are medled / with heuy langour
How shulde we now rest / frome mornynge certayne
Beholdynge now deed / whylom our protectour
Swete lady thou art gone / frome vs for euermore
Our deedly sorowe / replete with bytternes
For waylynge and wepyng / can neuer ceas.**

**With herte mynde and voyce / to the we do call
O blessed Werburge / our moost dere maystres
O sufferayne lady / and ruler of vs all
Why haste thou vs lefte / in suche heuynesse
If thy wyll had ben / it is knownen expresse
Thou myght haue tarped / with vs by petycyon
Alas remedyleffe / is our lamentacyon**

**frome vs thou arte taken / and gone is our solace
The myrrour of vertue / is deed now with the
The tryed flock of truth / and the grounde of grace
Is pyteously decayed / our hope and sufferaynte
O blessed sauyour / vpon vs haue pyte
Sende vs our conforste / by thy great myght agayne
As thou haste reysed many / from dethe to lyfe certayne.**

**O dredefull dethe / cruell enemy to nature
With dolefull heuynes / on the we may complayne
Takyng our heed frome vs / to our great dyscomfytur
Hath brought vs to thraldome / wofulnes and peyne
Nothyr kyng ne emperour / thy fauour may optayne
But he must departe / arested with thy launce.**

Thanke we god of all / for it is his pleasaunce.

How the hamburgenses toke the blessed body of Wer-
burge frome Trentam by myracle & brought it to Ham-
bury / & of y^r burypall of werburge / & of manyfolde myra-
cles shewed for her merytes .ix. yere after her trāslacyon.
Ca. xxx.

This glorious byrgyn / and moost blessed abbace
Departed from this lyfe / caduce and transytory
(As afore is sayd) the yere and tyme of grace
Almoost seven hundredeth / the thyrde day of february
To celestyall blyss / and infynyte glory
Her subiectes oppressed / with wylfull pensyuenesse
With great trybulacyon / care and heuynesse.

But where werburge gaue / in commaundment
To bury her corps / at place of Hambury
As was the wyl / of our lorde omnyipotent
Her subiectes of Trentam / whiche had her body
Purposed her wyl / and entent to deny
Prepared to kepe / the corps by stronge hande
With them to remayne / as ye shall vnderstande.

The sayd people of Trentam / watched full dyligent
Her corps fulfyllynge / the obsequyes funerall
Entendynge to auoyde / and frustrate her testament
Gate a great company / by power Marcyall
Closed fast theyr doores / and gates one and all
Made sure yche place / by theyr prouydens
For to kepe the corps / excludynge Chamburgens.

But as Salomon sayth / sentenciously

There may be no counseyll / power ne prudence
Wysedome of man / nor naturall polycy
To derogate or chaunge / deuyne sentence
Proued euer day / by true experyence
Tho mankynde prepose / his mynde to fulfyll
yet god dyspolet / all thyng at his wyll.

And as they watched / the same sayd myght
Aloost busily / to execute they wyll and entent
By deuyne prouydence / passyng mannes myght
Sodeynly on slepe / was all that couent
Theyr company and mynysters / that were there lent
Hauyng no power / for to waken doubtles
God so prouyded / for theyr great maystres.

Chan shortly resembled / vnto that sayd place
The people of Hamburgens / a great company
With the mynysters of god / people full of grace
And anone by the wyll / of our lorde almyghty
The lockes and the barres / of that sayd monastery
Fell downe to the grounde / by power supernall
Without mannes hande / that enter they myght all.

Whiche myracle proued / the people of Hambury
Entred Trentam abbay / with mynde reuerent
And founde there on slepe / all the other company
Man / woman / and chyld / all that were present
They kneled all downe / and worshypped the sacrament
Praysyng our maker / of theyr good spede
Theyr specyall socour / euer at theyr nede.

Her blessed body / from Trentam they dyd take
Werburge. Li.

Gladly departynge / out of the monastery
Neither man nor woman / had power to wake
Tyll they were passed / all greuous Jeopardy
Magnifyenge our lord / of his grace deuoutly
Solemply syngyng their songes celestially
With infinite gladnes / and comfort spirituall.

After all this done / this holy congregacion
With reuerence / honour / and solempnite
With wepyngteariss / for pure affection
With lamentable songes / masse and dirige
Buried the corps / of this blessed ladie
Right in the chauncell / of the sayd abbay
There bodily to rest / as her wyll was alway.

All obsequies ended / therto belongynge
As was agreeable for suche a president
The sisters departed / with clamour and mournynge
Plonged in heuynes / and to their celles went
To wepe and wayle secretly / their hartis to content
Cryng alas alas / nowe buried haue we
The exemple of vertu / mekenes / and chastite.

And as the history of her lyfe / doth expresse
In a booke nominat / the thrid Passiounary
After the buriall of this patronesse
The place was decorat / with myracles many
Manifest to the people / of euery progeny
Howe god almyghty of his speciall grace
Hath done for his seruant / in short tyme and space.

For many people greued with infirmite

Dolorous of hert / and interiour tribulacion
Peynnes of mynde / or other penalite
To her graue resortyng / with feruent deuocion
Seking for remedy / with great contricion
Anon by her prayer / vnto our sauyour
They were released from payne and langour.

Also by her merite suffrage and petition
Euery humble creature had helpe and succour
To distract persons / was yelded reason
Wikked spirites expulled . were that same hour
Impotent and feble to helth she dyd restour
Halt and lame had passage / the blynde had pfect syght
The dombe had speche / the desse helynge ryght.

Women with childe / beyng in great ieopardy
Namely in trauelyng / greued with wo and payne
Whan they myght nat come / sendyng to her oratorye
Makyng true oblacion / restaured were certayne
To helth and prosperite / from wo deliuered playne
And if they obteyned a relique from the place
The mother and childe / by it founde speciall grace.

The deuout pilgrym / the perfit maryner
The true laborer / the marchant with richesse
The carefull pore man / the peynfull prisoner
Were sondry tymes deliuered from wo and distresse
Men / women / child / sekyng with mekenes
This glorious virgyn / with humble supplicacion
Founde soone remedie / helpe and consolacion.

¶ A litle breue reherfall of her lyfe / and howe for her
Werburge. Lii.

miracles shewed y^e couent of Hambury purposed to tra
slate her body / by the helpe of Maerçens. Ca.xxri.

THis glorýous lady / and gemme of holýnesse
Of fyue myghty kynges / descended lynyally
A prynces / an enherýtryce / replete with mekenes
Refused all pleasures / pompe / and bayne glóry
Entred relyggon / professed at Ely
A spectacle of vertue / dwellynge in that place
And a floure of chastyte / electe by synfuler grace.

Her honorable vncl / kyng Eþhelrede
Consyderýnge her vertue / and hye deuocyon
Maðe her gouernour / for ghostly helthe and mede
ouer all the monasteryes / within his regyon
for the sure encresement / of perfyte relyggon
foure of these monasteryes / we haue in memory
As Wedon / Trentam / Kepton / and Hambury.

When she was ruler / and chefe presýdent
Of these sayd places / vnder god almyghty
Than vertue and goodnes / dayly dyd augment
By heuenly grace / to the soule helthe of many
And by her exemple / and doctryne ghostly
Kynges / lordes / barons / refusýnge theyr royalte
Entred relyggon / with great humylyte.

Her lyfe and doctryne / agreed bothe in one
Proued in effecte / by specyall gyftes of grace
Many she conuerted / vnto contemplacyon
To prayer and penaunce / whyle they had here space
Her couent and subiectes / within euery place
By her excellent vertue / and hye dyscrecyon

Were graciouſly gouerned / for theyr ſaluacion.

Her dwellinge was moſt at the place of Medon
Where many myracles were ſhewed openly
And at Trentam abbay / of her foundation
From payne ſhe departed to eternall glory
After her entent was buried at Hambury
Of whom it may be ſayd / here lyeth nowe preſent
A princeſſe / a virgin / a nonne / and a preſident.

The deuout couent of her congregacion
Whiche hath long wayled / with ſorrowfull payne
Nowe haue great cauſe to make conſolacion
And gyue due honour to our lorde and ſufferayne
Knowynge that Werburge / in blyſſe is nowe certayne
For them all dayly a true mediatrice
In the heuynly trone / afore the hie Juſtice.

Our ſauour Jeſus / graunter of all goodnes
Conſydering the mekenes / and pure virginite
Of Werburge his ſpouſe / and proued holynes
By ſpeciall grace / preſerued her body
To his laude and honour / his name to magnifye
Both hole and ſounde / from naturall reſolucion
As her ſoule was clere from vice and corruption.

This immaculat mayde / ſpenyng more bryght
Than radiant phebus in the triumphant trone
With the quere of virgins / prayſeth day and nyght
The bleſſed trinite with due adoracion
Of perpetuall pleaſure hauyng the fruition
A ſingular interceſſour for her ſeruauntes all
Werburge.

Liii.

That here in erth mekely to her wyll call

**And though her body do rest nowe in graue
yet notable signes continually be done
Some warned in their slepe comfort to haue
By visityng her place / callynge her vpon
With contrite hert makynge true oblacion.
Whiche thyng continued by space of .ix. yere
With meruailous myracles euident and clere**

**The couent consyderyng suche great company
from diuers partes / resortynge to theyr place
In pylgrimage to Werburge / for helpe and remedy
Entended to translate this glorious abbasse
To exalte her body replet with great grace
To her great honour / comfort to eche creature
Pite that suche a relique shulde lye in sepulture**

**To the prayes and honour of god omnipotent
And of saint Werburge laude and reuerence
The couent and the people by one assent
Desired Coelrede than kynge of merciens
for aide in this case / helpe and diligence
(Whiche thyng graunted) the day appointed was
The clergy and the comons reioised with solace**

**¶ Of the solempne transacion of this glorious virgyn
saint Werburge / and of the great myracles done at the
sajd season by the myght of god and merite of this gra-
cious lady.**

Cap.rrrii.

At the day appoynted of her transacion

Kyng Coelred and his counsell were redy present
With bysshops and the clergy men of deuotion
Her systers and subiettes a religious couent
The comon people from eche place thider went
With great gladnes / the hole for pleasure gostly
The seke and impotent for helth and remedy

The bysshops and clergy stode bpon one parte
Of her holy graue / and her systers echone
Syngynge and prayynge the blessed trinite
The kyng and his connell with great deuotion
Stode on the other parte in contemplacion
The graue was opened eleuat was the chest
Wherin her holy corps. ix. yere fully dyd rest

Whan this sayd monument discovered was
Suche a suauite and fragrant odoure
Ascended from the corps by singular grace
Passyng all worldly swetnes and sauour
That all there present that day and hour
Supposed they had ben / in the felicity
Of erthely paradise / without ambiguite.

And as eche man thaught by naturall reason
Nothyng shulde remayn of that blessed body
But the bare boones / all els to resolucion
The couerture remoued by the sayd clergy
The corps hole and sounde was funde verely
Apperyng to them / on slepe as she had ben
Nothyng depaired / that ther coude be seen.

Her besture appered hole clere and white
Werburge. Liiii.

No parte consumed / for all the longe space
Fragrant in odoure / repleit with delite
As at the fyrst season whan she buried was
But whan discovered was her swete face
Beautye appered more white than the lile
Fairt with rose colour / moost faire for to se

Her louely countenanne / so comly to beholde
And her swete fisnomy / with fairenes decorat
As freslhely apparant / moost pleasant to be tolde
As at the fyrst day / whan she was tumulat
No doubt therof / for she with synne nat maculat
Asyng all her lyfe in clenness and virginite
From bodily corruption / by grace must saued be.

The clergy yet serchyng more diligently
Her precious body / and interiour besture
Eleuat the corps full reuerently
With moche worchip honour and cure
Founde nothyng perished in shap nor figure
For all the long space tyme and contynuaunce
She lay in sepulture by diuine ordynaunce.

Whiche famous myracle / notified so clere
The clergy with her systers in ioy and honour
The kyng and his counsell all therat present were
With voice melodious made a great clamour
Prayng and magnifyng our blessed sauiour
With celestially songes / and hymnes full of blys
Deuoutly rehercyng / with all their deuour
Mirabilis deus in sanctis tuis.

With that the comon rude people euerychone
In the sayd churche yerde standyng without
Heryng the clergy syng with suche deuocion
Towarde heuen they cried / and busely dyd shout
The space of .iii. houres / or nere there about
Worshippyng our lorde / with boice shrill and loude
In hert wyll and mynde / as well as they coude.

After all this done / her blessed body
Was washed and reclothed with vesture precious
By the sayd couent of the place of Hambury
The byshops were reuested in pontificalibus
And all the clergy syngyng with boice melodious
Kneled all downe and gaue due reuerence
Honour and worship to her corporall presence.

Thus they receyued with perfit humilite
This sacrat relique hole and substanciall
And layd it in a shryne with great solempnite
Enownded with riches sumptuous and roiall
Prepared by the kyng / and ordeyned inspeciall
Entendyng that this relique and gostly treasure
Perpetuallly with them shulde remayne and endure

People oppressed with greuous infirmite
Distract persons / halt blynde and lame
Resortynge to her shryne with humilite
Shortly were cured by callynge of her name
Impotent creatures (the legende sayth the same)
Touchyng her tumber / were cured from payne
Whiche tumber remayneth at Hambury certayne

After she was translate / knowen it is well
The clergy to procession / went after to mas
Honouryng and prayfynge / the kyng of Israell
And blessed Werburge / with moche solace
Whan diuine seruice duely ended was
The bishops gaue theyr holy benedictions
The people departed glad to their mansions

This holy sayd fest of her translation
Was ordeyned and celebrate with solemnite
As sayeth Kanulphus in his policronicon
About the yere of grace .vii. hundreth and .viii. tothle
The .xi. kalendas of the moneth Julii
Regnyng in mercelande the said kyng Coelrede
Chan bysshop of Lichefeld was Hedda / as we rede

¶ Howe the body of saynt Werburge contynued hole /
and substanciall at Hambury after the translation by the
space of two hundreth yeres / tyll the danes were comon
to this lande / or it felle and was resolued vnto powder
The .xxxiii. Chapitre.

This rutilant gemme and specious flour
Hole and substanciall remayned at Hambury
Two hundreth yeres in beaute and colour
By singular grace / and angelicall custodie
Tyll the danes were comon of malice and misery
Of ire and myschief / as we vnderstande
We meane the comyng of pagans to this lande

Whiche danes by sufferance and dispensacion

Of almyghty god / for synne and iniquite
Punysshed vnpiteously all this region
With a wofull plague of great crudelite
The sharpe swerde of deth / haurynge no pite
Spared no creature / prest nor religious
Long tyme durynge in their malice odious

Than this bitall glebe by diuine ordinaunce
Voluntary permytted naturall resolution
Lest the cruell gentils / and wiked myscreauntes
With pollute handes full of corrupcion
Shulde touche her body / by indignation
Whiche pagans were enemyes to our lorde Iesu
Rebels to holy church vnfeithfull and vntrue

Howe be it the power of our swete sauyour
Myght haue continued the body of his tyruant
All that longe season in worshyp and honour
As he preserued of his grace abundaunt
Many sayntes of this realme hole freshe and vernal
viii. hundreth yeres ago / to this present day
And like so to endure / hole and clere alway.

Sothely to confesse / our lorde omnipotent
Glorious in his sayntes / scripture doth specifie
Of his diuine prouidence / pleasure and intent
Some haue resolved / for the greater glorie
Of their resurrection for the tyme truly
Some other to continue without corrupcion
To the true example of his promission

Many holy martyrs / for Christ haue ben slayne

The hie prestis of god murdred cruelly
Some with wyld beasts deuoured in certayne
Some cast in fiers on cooles to boyle and fry
Upon many other byrdes fedyng openly
Of whom the prophet clerely doth reherce
The more payne here and wo / the more glory doubles.

The glorious martyr Stephan (as is red)
In this present lyfe dyd myracles many
Newertherles / he raised no people that were deed
But after the resoluyng of his blessed body
He raised deed men to lyfe agayne truly
That the great power of lyfe myght sprynge
From iniurie of deth / by our heuen kynge.

Great was the respect of diuine grace
In the body of Werburge / without resolucion
Shewed by her myracles / for mannes helth and solace
But greatt was the hope of the eterne reuouacion
In her body resolved to naturall consumption
Whiche for her merites to this present day
Helpeth all her seruantes that to her wyll praye

Therefore worshyp we with singular deuocion
The holy lyuynge of this virgin gracious
for why / all the halowynge of her conuersacion
Belongeth to the honour of our lorde Iesus
Whiche of his grace hath made her so glorious
And graunteth his mercy / and of synne remysion
To all them / for whom / she maketh intercession.

Blessed pure virgin / moines and abbasse

O venerable werburge / mekely we the pray
 Make thou supplicacyon / to the graunter of grace
 After this lyfe present / that all we may
 Come to heuen blyſſe / whiche laſteth for ay
 There to beholde / the glorious trynitye
 To whom be laude / worſhypp / honour / & endles glorie.

C The table of the ſeconde boke of y^r glo-
 rious byrgyn ſaynt Werburge.



If the comynge to this lande of paganes / and
 of the trouble of this lande / and how y^r kyng
 of Mercyens for drede departed out of this
 lande / and how longe ſaynt Werburge con-
 tynued incorrupte and hole at the abbay of
 Hambury. Ca.i.

C How the people of Hambury brought the ſhyne to
 Cheſter / and of the ſolempne receyvinge of it / by all the
 inhabytauntes of the countre. Ca.ii.

C A lytell deſcrypcyon of the fundacyon of Cheſter / and
 of y^r abbay church within the ſayd cytee / where the holy
 ſhyne remaineth. Ca.iii.

C A breue reherſall / of the fyrſt fundacyon of the myn-
 ſter of Cheſter / & of the inſtytucyon of ſeculer chanons /
 in the tyme of kyng Edward the ſenior. Ca.iiii.

C Of the notable myracle of ſaynt Werburge in y^r tyme
 of chanons / and fyrſt how ſhe ſaued Cheſter from the de-
 ſtruccyon of Walſhe men. Ca.v.

¶ Howe saynte Werburge cured and healed a woman the tymes whiche was halt and lame to helthe and prosperite agayne. Cap.vi.

¶ Howe saynt Werburge saued and defended Chester from innumerable barbarik nacions purposynge to de stroye and spoyle the same cite vtterly. Cap.vii.

¶ Howe saynt Werburge by her merite sent fruyte to a barayne Woman by synguler praper made vnto her. Cap.viii.

¶ Howe a woman with childe by peyne brought out of her mynde & reason by saynt Werburge was restaured to prosperite and helthe agayne. Cap.ix.

¶ Of a nother woman vnlawfully wurkyng was made blynde and sore punysshed/and by saint Werburge was restored to syght agayne. Cap.x.

¶ Howe saint Werburge restored to helth & prosperite vi. lame & halt persons by singular grace. Ca.xi.

¶ Of a yonge man vnrighfully hanged was thries deliuered from deth by saynt Werburge to helth and prosperite. Cap.xii.

¶ Howe at the maner of Apto saynt Werburge refrayned wilde hoxes from distruction of her cornes. ca.xiii.

¶ Of a chanō of Chester haupyng his leg brokē was restored to helth by saint Werburge his prones. Ca.xiiii.

¶ A breue reherfall or cronicle of certayne kyngis/and howe kyng Edgar came to Chester/also howe erle Leofrice repared diuers churches. Ca.xb.

¶ Of the comyng of Wyllyam cōquerour to this lande/ & howe Lupe was fonder of Chester monastery. ca.xbi.

¶ Howe saint Werburge taught her monke to kepe patience for the greater merite and glory to come. ca.xbii.

¶ Howe sandes rose vp within the salt see ayentst Hilburghde by saint Werburge at the petition of William constable of Chestre. Ca.xbiii.

¶ Howe Matild / countesse of Chestre counsellunge her husband agaynst the monasterie was drowned at Bartflowe with many other mo. Cap.xix.

¶ Howe a great fire like to destroye all Chestre by myracle ceased whan the holy shryne was borne about the towne by the monkes. Ca.xx.

¶ A breue reherfall of the myracles of saynt Werburge after her translacion to Chestre. Ca.xxi.

¶ A charitable mocio / counsel / & desire to al thynhabitatz win the countie palatin of Chest for y^r monastori. ca.xxii.

¶ A litle orison or prayer to y^r blessed virgin saint Werburge by the translatour of this warke. Ca.xxiii.

¶ A short conclusion of this litle werke to the reders by the translatour. Ca.xxiiii.

C The prologe of the translatour of this lytell
treatyse in the seconde boke.

Now whan we consyder / with mynde delygent
The merueylous maners / & synguler condycion
Of the comyn people / symple and neclygent
Whiche without lytterature / and good informacyon
Ben lyke to brute beestes / as in comparyson
Rude / wyld / and boyssous / by a prouerbe certan
Good maners and conyng / maken a man.

Saynt Paule sayth / the wyng to the Romans
How all thyng wyten / in holy scripture
Is wyten for our doctryne / and ghostly ordynans
For our great conforte / and endeles pleasure
All thyng is knowen playnly / by lytterature
For all vertues / be noted by it full playne
Frome vyce and neclygence / to abstayne certayne.

What were mankynde / without lytterature
Full lytell worthy / blynded by ignorance
The way to heuen / it declareth ryght sure
Thugh perfyte leryng / and good perseuerance
By it we may be taught / for to do penaunce
Whan we transgresse / our lordes commaundment
It is a swete cordyall / for mannes entent.

How shulde the seven / sciences lyberall
Haue ben preserued / vnto this day
The wysdome / of the phylosophers all
But alone by leryng / it is no nay
The notable actes / of our fathers I say

(yf litterature were nat) myght nat nowe be tolde
Nor auncient histories and cronycles olde

The lawe of ciuile / and of holy canon
By study be preferred with moche honour
To erecute iustice / and for due reformation
The most blessed doctrine of our sauour
The actis of the apostoles / with the doctours four
Be preferred by wytyng / and put in memorie
With the lyues of saintes many a noble storie

Of whiche histories we purpose speciall
To speke of saint Werburge / vnder your protection
Delaryng the ende of her lyfe historiall
As we haue begon / and made playne mencion
In the fyrst volume by breue compilacion
There playnly descriuynge her liniall discens
Of .iiii. myghty kyngdomes by true experience

Also we haue shewed in the sayd littel boke
Her goodly maners / and vertuous disposicion
Of her yonge age / who so lyst theron to loke
And howe her betherne suffred martyrdome
Of her fathers realme a litell discripcion
Howe she was professed in the place of Ely
Of her conuersacion within the sayd monastery

After for her vertue / howe she was made abbasse
Of diuers monasteries flouryng in vertue
And of the great miracles whiche there done was
For her great charite / by the grace of Jesu
Howe diuers of her kynde ded clerely exchewe
Werburge. m.i.

All worldly pleasures and honours transitory
Professynge obedience at the place of Fly

Also we haue shewed vnder your licence
Of her departure from this lyfe mortall
And of her sepulture at the place of Hamburgence
The manyfolde myracles shewed by grace supernall
The wofull lamentacion of her spytters all
And howe after .ix. yere of her translation
By diuine ordinaunce miracles were done

We humble require you of your charite
To this seconde abstract to graunt pardon
Consyderynge we omytte whilom the historie
And speke of cronicles / makynge a digression
It is of no ignoraunce / nor presumption
But to enlarge the mater and sentence
To gladden the auditours / and moue their diligence

In our seconde boke expresse nowe wyll we
Under your licence and speciall tuicion
Of this blessed virgin / flourynge in chastite
Why and wherfore she came to Cheshire towne
Principally by miracle / and diuine provision
And howe for synne / vice / and wykednes
Danes oppressed this lande with wretchednes

And howe she was receyued at Cheshire citie
Of the fyrst foundation of towne and the place
Of the great myracles there shewed openlie
To chanyons and monkes / by singular grace
Unto euery creature in extreme case

Howe Werburge deliuered the towne from ennemye
from dreadfull fire / and plagues of miserie

Also enconicled foloweth here expresse
A breste compilation of kyngs Edwardes senour
Of kyng Ethelstan / the great worthynes
Of humble kyng Edgar regnyng as emperour
Of his comyng to Chestre / of his great honour
And howe Erle Leofricke repared of his charite
The mynstre of Werburge gyuyng therto liberte

Of the seconde foundation of the sayd monastery
from secular chanons to monkes religious
Soone after the conquest sayth the hystorie
By the erle of Chestre nominat Hug. Lupus
With counsell and helpe of blessed Anselmus
And of the great compas of the sayd abbay
Enuired with walles myghty to assay

Howe Ric^e erle of Chestre by myracle ryght
Was preserued from daunger of Malhemment
And howe he was drowned about mydnyght
Purposyng to distroye the monastery certen
Celestiall signes were shewed to men and women
To children and innocentes by singular grace
Of blessed Werburge patronesse of the place

These miracles specified / and many other mo
This virgin shewed within Chestre cite
Whiche at this tyme we let ouer go
Lest to the reders tedious it shulde be
Almyghty god both one two and thre
Werburge.

m.ii.

Sende vs theyr grace to make a good ende
Helpe lady Werburge this warke to amende

¶ Of the comyng of cruell pagans to this lande / and
howe saint Werburge longe lyenge hole and incorrupt
at Hambury. than was resolved to powder. And howe
the kynge of merciens was chased from his lade. Ca.i.

Afore the comyng of danes to this lande
Mirueilous signes were shewed in syght
To conuert the people (as we vnderstande)
Sterres in the heuen shynnyng full bryght
Dyuersly mounyng apperyng day and nyght
Kennynge in the ayre dreedfull to beholde
By longe continuance sayth the story olde

flamynge fire / dragons in the ayre fleyng
Thondryng / and lapyng / erth quake moost terrible
With many other signes / as cometis blasynge
Were seen in the ayre / to nature horrible
Upon clothyng of people bloody dropes odible
Euydently appered : the yere of grace
vii. hundreth. lxxvi in many a place

By whiche sayd signes wonderfull to se
Two plages of pestilence folowed incontinent
The first was great derthes hungre and pouerte
The seconde was the greuous and sore punysshement
Of the cruell danes cursed and fraudulent
Whiche trouble began the .iiii. yere of Brictius
Kynge of west saxon / saith maister Alfridus.

The thyde yere folowynge these signes in certen
Danes and Norwaies enterprised this lande
In the north partie . an host of armed men
Whiche cruelly spoiled and destroyed holy Ilande
With Cynmouth abbay / and all that myght be sonde
Drowned and slewe the people euerychone
Brenned churches / townes / spared no religion

In short tyme after the prenominate pagans
At tamysmouth reentred this realme agayne
Destroyed many cites by their myghty ordynaunce
Oppressed London / Canturbury by power certayne
The kyng of Merciens to escape was fayne
Kynge Adoulfus made the danes a batell
To whiche kyng by grace the victorie befell

yt ye wyll consydre the cause wherfore and why
Our lorde suffred pagans to punyshe this region
The trowth was this : for synne specially
for in the primatiue churche / with great perfection
Kyniges / quienes / dukes entred religion
Professed obedient chaste without propurte
Vertue to encrease / true loue and charite

That tyme was iustice ministred with mercy
True loue and amite founde in euery place
Dissemblacion / pride and fals enuie
Durst nat appere in halle nor in palace
Extorcion pollynge opteyned no grace
The commaundementes of god were obserued a ryght
Charite was seruent / encreasynge day and nyght
Merburge.
m.iii.

By proces of tyme / as sayth myn auctour
Throughe great possession / power / and liberte
Vertue decreased in holy church day and hour
Holy religion decayed pitiouſle
Charite was colde / iuſtice and equite
Extorcion diſceyte were bleſed euery day
Couetiſe / pride / lechery were ryued alway

Therefore our lorde of his great ryghtwiſnes
Suffred cruell people to entre this region
A ſcourge to correct ſynne and wykednes
Like a ſwarme of bees from dyuers nacion
Whiche had no pite mercy nor compaſſion
Danes Gotes Norwayes and ſcottes alſo
Pictes and the wandeles with many other mo

Theſe foreſayd fearfull and cruell nacion
Moſt cruell pagans dyd great perſecucion
From the begynnynge of Adelwlf kyng of weſſaxons /
Tyll the comynge of normans into this region
The ſpace enduryng by full computacion
Two hundreth yeres complet .ccc. alſo
With the ſwerde of vengeance fire and moche mo

The yere of our lorde .D.CCC. fyfty and one
At Camplmouth arriued a great hoſt of pagans
With .iii. hundreth ſhips and .l. men of armes echone
Whiche deſtroied Doye / and put the land to greuous
Agayne Bernulphus the kyng of ſtircians
The paynymys pteyple / and cauſed his hoſt to fle
Whiche fortune enforced them more bold to be.

But the yere of grace .D.CCC. five and sixtie
The greatestt nombie of the pagans all
biii. kynges entred this realme by victorie
Norwaies / gootes / Wlandels / danes in especiall
With many other nacions within in generall
Kyng Hingwar and Hubba than came to this lande
Whiche slewe saint Edmund kyng of Estenglande

The cruell paynymys and tyrauntes moost furious
Repleit with malice / pride / and enuye
Seruauntes to satan and ministres malicious
Purposed to defolate holy churche wyckedly
Byenned monasteries and spoiled vtterly
Many churches chapels of a mortall hate
Slewe religious men and nonnes dyd violate

The people were punished in every place
To olde sick and impotent they shewed no mercy
Ponge soukyng children coude fynde no grace
Wydowes and wyues were put to vilany
Maydens were corrupt / and slayne chamfully
So all this realme endurred confusion
Put to greuous peyne / deth / and affliction

After these infidels had ben at London
And there accomplished theyr cruell entent
They soone proceded towarde Lincoln region
From thens directly with hasty iugement
To the realme of Merciens noble and auncient
Right vnto Repton where the kyng lay
Robbyng and spoilyng all in theyr way

This kynge of Mercelande called Burmedus
 Regnyng .xxii. yere vpon the merciens
 Was clerely expulſed by the pagans furious
 And went into rome with pure conſcience
 Where he is buried by diuine prouidence
 Whiche kyng was colyn by diſcent limiall
 To bleſſed Werburge ſo glorious and pudicall

This gracious virgin and preelect abbaſſe
 Buried at Hambury (as is ſayd before)
 Continued incorrupt and hole in that place
 In beſture and body .ii. hundreth yere and more
 But whan the danes came With ſuche rigour
 To Repton abbay / than ſhe was reſolued
 And of deuocion full richely ſhyned

¶ Howe the people of Hambury brought the ſhryne to
 Cheſtre / and of the ſolemnne receyvinge of it by all the in
 habitauntes of Cheſthyre. Cap.ii.

In meane tyme the danes pitouſly deſtroyed
 The monaſteries of Werburge / Trenta & Medo
 As they many other places had euill oppreſſed
 In the north and eſt part of this region
 The kyngdome of Kent ſuffred lyke puniſhment
 The Ile of Wight endured moche turment
 So dyd the Weſtmarches / for punyſhement

The people of Hambury Wyſely conſydering
 The comyng of danes into Repton
 And of the departure of Burmed the kyng
 Howe all Englande was in great affliction

And howe they were next to endure punicion
Whiche forsayd Repton was distaunt from Hamburg
The space of .v. mile sayth the history

The Hamburgent With all the comons and clergy
Pedyng full sore the pagans flagellacions
Of their lyues desperate / but for the shyne specially
To our blessed sauour made dayly inuocations
With bigds prayers and feruent meditacions
To prelerue the countrey / the relique / the shyne
From daunger of enmite and miserable ruyne

As they continued in cotidian prayer
The best remedie sekynge for to fynde
To auoide beracion and all greuous daunger
Of theyr great ennemies cursed and bnhynde
The holy goost inspired theyr mynde
To take the shyne with great humilite
And bynge it to Chestre from perill and emmyte

They toke this riall relique of reuerence
With great mekenes deuocion and feruour
Through the grace of god theyr helpe and defence
Came towarde Chester with diligence and honour
A place preordinat by our sauour
Where her body shulde rest and worshipped be
Magnified with miracles next our ladie

¶ When the clergie of Chestre and the citezens
Herde tell of the comynge of this noble abbasse
They made preparacion and great diligence
In theyr best maner worship and solace
Wierburge. n.i.

To mete this relique of singular grace
The great estates / and rulers of the countray
Were redy to honour saint Werburge that day

first was ordeyned a solenne procession
With crosles / and baners / and surges clere lyght
The belles were tolled for iope and deuotion
The ministres of god in coopes redy dight
With censours of siluer / to encense her body right
All prestis and clerkes redy to say and synge
Proceeded in ordre / this holy birgin prayng

Next to the clergie approached in degree
The lordes of the thyre knyghtes barons all
With feruent deuotion / prayng the trinite
Whiche sent to them suche comfort spirituall
The citezens ensued with gladnes cordiall
With bokes and beades / magnifieng our maker
for this great treasure to kepe them from daunger

Venerable birgins next sette in ordre clere
With lilies in theyr handes / coronate with chastite
Good widowes and wyues appoynted well were
Gyuyng true thankes vnto this birgin fre
Nex them assemble all the commonte
In all goodly maner dyuisid by discrecion
Prayng saynt Werburge with humiliacion

When they approached to her hie presence
And comon were afore this relique most riall
They kneled all downe with mycle reuerence
Salutynge the thyne with honour victoriall

Magnifyng With melodye and tunys muscail
This glorious birgin / nothyng done amis
Syngeynge Te deum to the kyng of blyse

The lordes / the citezins / and all the commons
Achely submytted themselfe to the knyghte
With manyfolde prayes and humble supplications
With interiour loue / and morall discipline
Trustyng all in her to saue them from ruyne
From greuous daunger / and cruell enmite
By her intercession vnto the trinite

They gaue due thankes vnto this abbasse
Deuoutly sayenge knelyng vpon kne
Welcome swete lady replet with grace
The floure of mekenes / and of chastite
The cristall of clemmes and birginite
Welcome thou art to vs euerychone
A speciall comfort for vs to trust vpon

Welcome swete princeesse / kynges doughter dere
Welcome faire creature / and rose of merciens
The diamonde of dignite / and gême of shenyng clere
Virgyn and moyniall of mycle excellence
Welcome holy abbasse of hie preeminence
The rutilant saphire of syncerite
Welcome swete patronesse to Chestre cite

Thou art our refuge / and singular succour
Our sure tuicion next to the trinite
Our speciall defence at euery hour
To releue thy seruauntes in all necessite
Werburge.

n.ii.

**Thou art our solace and helpe in eche degre
Our ioye / trust / and comfort / and goodly treasure
Welcome to this towne for euer to endure**

**¶ Agaynst her comynge into Chestre cite
The stretes were strawed with flours fragrant
The mancions and halles edified rialle
Were hanged with arras precious and pleasaunt
Torches were caried on eche syde fragrant
Also ouer the shryne was prepared a canopy
Of cloth of golde and tissewe riche and costly**

**Thus with great worship decour and dignite
Of all the clergie lordis and citezens
She was receyued with great humilite
Into the cite with humble reuerence
The clergie syngyng with mycle diligence
The comons prayeng with loue feruent
ffollowynge this relique after their entent**

**In procession they passed all in to the towne
With ioye and great gladnes ye may besure
In orde togyther in charite and deuocion
Prayfng our sauour and this virgin pure
They brought full solemple with goodly peasure
This riall relique to the moost noble place
Within all the cite as our lordes wyll was**

**This seconde translaton of this virgin bright
from Hambury abbay vnto Chestre cite
Was celebrate with ioye and gladnes full right
The pere of our saueour in his humanite**

viii. hundreth complet .b. and seuentie
Alured regned than kyng of this region
Victorious and liberall / coronate at London

This kyng deuoyded in .iiii. partes his richesse
One parte to the poore the seconde to religion
One thyde part to scholers / the fourth to bild churches
And of a day naturall / he made triū dibiſſion
viii. houres to rede and praye with ſeruent deuocion
viii. houres occupied with buſineſſe naturall
And other .viii. houres to rule his realme riall

henric° .li°.b.

Nobilitas innata tibi probitas honorem
Armipotens Aluredē dedit / probitasq; laborem :
Perpetuumq; labor nomen : cui mixta dolori
Gaudia ſemper erant : ſpes ſemper mixta timori.
Si modo victus erat / ad crastina bella parabat
Si modo victor erat / ad crastina bella pauebat
Jam poſt tranſactos regni bñeq; labores /
Chriſte ei ſit vera quies / ſceptrumq; perenne.

¶ A litel deſcripcion of the foundation of Cheſtre / and
of the abbay churche within the ſayd cite / where y^r holy
Myne by grace remayneth. Cap.iii.

Two cites of legions in cronicles we fynde
One in ſouth Wales / in the tyme of Claudius
Called Caerufka / by britons had in mynde
Orels Caerleon / buryled by kyng Belinus
¶ There ſomtyme was a legion of knyghtes chivalrous
This cite of legions was whilom the biſhops ſe
Unto all ſouth wales / nominat Menedocie
Merburge. n.iii.

Another cite of legions we may fynde also
In the west part of Englande / by the water of Dee
Called Caerleon of britons longe ago
After named Chestre by great auctorite
Julius the emperour sende to this sayd cite
A legion of knyghtes for to subdue Irelande
Like wyse dyd Claudius (as we vnderstande)

The founder of Chestre / as sayth Policronicon
Was Leon Bauer / a myghty stronge gyaunt
Whiche buylded caues and dongions many one
So goodly buyldyng / propre ne pleasaunt
But the kynge Leil a briton sure and balaunt
Was founder of Chestre by pleasaunt buyldyng
And of Caerleil also / named by the kynge

Ranulphus in his cronicle yet doth expresse
The cite of Chestre edified for to be
By the noble romans prudence and richesse
When a legion of knyghtes was sende to the cite
Rather than by the wysdome of Britons or policie
Obiectyng clere agaynst the britons fundacion
Whiche auctour resteth in his owne opinion.

A°. gratie. lrb.

Kyng Marius a bryton regnyng in prosperite
In the West partie of this noble region
Ampliat and walled strongly Chestre cite
And myghtyly fortified the sayd fundacion
Thus eche auctour holdeth a singular opinion
This Marius slewe Redric kyng of pictis lande
Callyng the place of his name Westmarilande

This cite of legions so called by the Romans
Nowe is nominat in latine of his propete
Cestria quasi castria / of honour and pleasance
Proued by the buyldynge of olde antiquite
In cellers and lowe boultres / and halles of realte
Lyke a comly castell / myghty stronge and sure
Eche house like a toure somtyme of great pleasure

Unto the sayd Chestre all north wales subiect were
for reformation Justice and iugement
They bysshops see also it was many a yere
Enduryng the gouernaunce of brutes auncient
To saxons and britons a place indifferent
The inhabitauntes of it manfull and liberall
Constant sad and bertuous / and gentyll continuall

Of frutes and cornes there is great habundaunce
Wooddes / parkes / forestes / and beestis of benare
Pastures / feeldes / comons / the cite to auauce
Waters / pooles / pondes / of fysh the great plente
Most swete holsome ayre by the water of dee
There is great marchandise / wypps / and wynes strang
With all thyng of pleasure the citezens amonge

The yere of our lorde a hundreth fyre and fyfty
Reigned vpon this lande a briton kyng Lucius
Whiche with great desire required instantly
His realme to be baptized of pope Clentherius
Whose charitable mocion was harde full gratius
The pope enioyed / graunted his petition
And sende .ii. doctours to conuerte this region
Werburge. n.iiii.

The doctours by preaching and singular grace
In short tyme conuerted the greater Britayne
The people confessed their synne and trespase
Baptized all were / forgyuenes dyd attayne
Idolatrie celled through out this lande certayne
With grace circumfulced and lyghtned was England
By faith to god professed was all Wales and Scotlande

Kynge Lucius ordeyned / by the doctours mocion
xxviii. bishops in this realme for to be
And .iii. archebishops for godly exhortacion
To reduce the people to vertue and humilite
At London was set the chief archebishops se
The seconde in south Wales at cite of legions
The thyrde was at yorke all subiect to the britons

Churches were edified in many a place
Here in the more Britayne with diligent labour
Christis faith encreased by speciall grace
Faithfull religion delated euery hour
Diuine seruice was songon & sayd with great honour
True faith and deuocion were dayly encreasyng
Namely in Cheshire by grace continuall abidinge.

Certaynly sith baptym came to Cheshire cite
Soone after Lucius and afore kynge Arthure
By the grace of god and their humilite
The faith of holy churche dyd euer there endure
Without recidiuacion and infection / sure
Wherefore it is worthy a singular commendacion
Above all the citees and townes of this region

The perfect begynnyng and fyrst foundacion
Of the monasterie within the sayd cite
Was at the same tyme by famous opinion
That baptym began within this countre
The great lordes of Chestre of landes and auncetre
first edified the church for comfort spirituall
In honour of the apostels Peter and Paule

Whiche church was principall to all the cite
And the mowther church called withouten doubt
It was their buriall by great auctorite
To all this sayd cite / and .vii. myle without
The cemiterie was large to compase it about
But what by sufferance and processe of tyme
Many olde customes ben brought now to ruine

In whiche mother church of Peter and Paule
All holy sacramentes ministred dayly were
With great encrease of vertues all
Continuall enduryng more than .CCC. yere
In the britons tyme / of blode noble and clere
Afore the comyng of saxons to this lande
Whiche with apostasie infected all Englande

So after that the Angles / Jutes / and saxons
By fortune of batell / power and policie
Had clerely subdued all the olde britons
And them expulsed to wales and wyld countre
The faith of holy church remainyd at chestre cite
In the sayd church truely by singular grace alone
Like as the faith of Peter neuer fayled at Rome

What tyme saint Austyn the doctour of Englande
Had baptized Ethelbryt kyng of Kent
And by relacion dyd fully vnderstande
That the faith of Christ most digne and excellent
In the cite of legions was truly remanent
In the churche of the apostoles Peter and Paule
He magnified our lorde with thanke speciall

That season there was a noble monasterie
xii. myles from Chestre nominate Bangour
Where religious monkes lyued vertuoussye
Almost .iii. thousande / obedient euery hour
Without possessions / lyuyng by theyr labour
Unto whiche place he sende for helpe at nede
To conuert the saxons (sayth venerable Bede)

Saynt Austyn approched the cite of legions
Where the sayd couent afore hym were present
Whom he required to preche to the saxons
The faith of holy churche and baptym diligent
To whose humble prayer / they were disobedient
Obseryng no charite / yet for theyr great pride
Many of them were slayne by kyng Ethelfride

That season the britons remayned vnder licence
Of Angles and saxons within the sayd cite
Tyll the dayes of Ossa kyng of merciens
Regnyng in the west marche with great victorie
Whiche kyng expelled by power and chivalrie
All brutes and walthemen clere out of his londe
In peyne of punysshement none there to be fonde

When the said church haupnge great liberte
Dayly augmented in vertue and holynes
Prestis and clerkes prayed the holy trinite
And the sayd apostoles with great mekenes
The cite encreased in worshyp and ryches
Churches were edified with feruent deuocion
In sondrie places within the sayd towne

This noble kyng Offa agaynst the pagans
Of .xvii. batels has euer the victorie
Confederate was with great Charles kyng of Fraunce/
And edified saint Albans monasterie
Of Englande first toke the hole monarchie
Gaue Peter pens vnto the court of Rome
Translate to Lichefeld, the se of Canturbury
xxxix. yere regned fully in this region.

¶ A brefe reherfall of the first foundacion of the mynstre
of Chestre / and of the institucion of secular chanons in
the tyme of kyng Edwardeseniour. Cap.iiii.

The yere of grace .D.C.C. seupnte and fyue
Kyng Alured regned vpon this region
The relique the shryne full memoratpue
Was brought to Chestre for our consolacion
Reuerently receyued set with deuocion
In the moutther church of saint Peter and Paule
(As afore is sayd) a place moost principall.

In whiche holy place vnto this present day
She bodilye resteth by diuine prouidence
And so by his grace shall continue alway
In honour worshyp / and mycle reuerence

What tyme saint Austyn the doctour of Englande
Had baptized Ethelbryt kyng of Kent
And by relacion dyd fully vnderstande
That the faith of Christ most digne and excellent
In the cite of legions was truely remanent
In the church of the apostoles Peter and Paule
He magnified our lorde with thanke speciall

That season there was a noble monasterie
xii. myles from Chestre nominate Bangour
Where religious monkes lyued vertuouſlye
Almost .iii. thousande / obedient every hour
Without possessions / lyuyng by theyr labour
Unto whiche place he sende for helpe at nede
To conuert the saxons (sayth venerable Bede)

Saynt Austyn approched the cite of legions
Where the sayd couent afore hym were present
Whom he required to preche to the saxons
The faith of holy church and baptym diligent
To whose humble prayer / they were disobedient
Obliteruyng no charite / yet for theyr great pride
Many of them were slayne by kyng Ethelfride

That season the britons remayned vnder licence
Of Angles and saxons within the sayd cite
Tyll the dayes of Offa kyng of merciens
Regnyng in the west marche with great victorie
Whiche kyng expelled by power and chivalrie
All brutes and walsghemen clere out of his londe
In peyne of punysshement none there to be fonde

When the said church haupnge great liberte
Dayly augmented in bertue and holynes
Prestis and clerkes prayled the holy trinite
And the sayd apostholes with great mekenes
The cite encreased in worshyp and ryches
Churches were edified with feruent deuocion
In sondrie places within the sayd towne

This noble kyng Ossa agaynst the pagans
Of .xvii. batels has euer the victorie
Confederate was with great Charles kyng of Fraunce/
And edified saint Albans monasterie
Of Englande first toke the hole monarchie
Gaue Peter pens vnto the court of Rome
Translate to Lichefeld, the se of Canturbury
rrxi. yere reigned fully in this region.

A brefe reherfall of the first foundacion of the mynstre
of Chestre/and of the institucion of secular chanons in
the tyme of kyng Edwardesenior. Cap.iiii.

The yere of grace .D.CCC. seupnte and fyue
Kyng Alured regned vpon this region
The relique the shryne full memoratpue
Was brought to Chestre for our consolacion
Reuerently receyued set with deuocion
In the mowther church of saint Peter and Paule
(As afore is sayd) a place moost principall.

In whiche holy place vnto this present day
She bodilye resteth by diuine prouidence
And so by his grace shall continue alway
In honour worshyp/and mycle reuerence

A deuout oratorie of vertue and excellence
Prepared by our lorde / where speciall remedy
Is agayne all greuans in soule and in body

The primatpue gyftes gyuen to the place
Immediately were after her comynge
Of deuout people replet with grace
In the dayes of the forsayd Alured kyng
Of landes and libertes they made moche offerynge
To god and saint Werburge / after theyr possession
Cristyng to her prayer and sure protection

The people with deuocion and mynde feruent
Gaued diuers enornentes vnto this place
Some gaued a coope / and some a bestement
Some other a chalice / and some a corporace
Many albes and other clothes offred ther was
Some croses of golde / some bokes / some belles
The pore folke gaued surges / torches / and towelles

The citezens offered to the sayd virgine
For the great miracles amonge them wrought
Many riall gyftes of Jewels to the shrine
Thankynge our lorde that hath vs all bought
And blessed Werburge in worde dede and thought
Women and children she mynded full gracious
As testifieth the archebishop Antoninus

Diuine seruice was obserued deuoutly
Euery day encreasynge with feruent adoration
As the feest required / and the solemnite
To the honour of our lorde and his glorificacion

Preistis and clerkes with pure meditacion
Oblerynge their dutie gaue vertuous example
Of great perfection to the comon people

¶ After kyng Alured / regned his son
Edward, senior by liniall discence
Crowned the yere of grace .ix. hundredeth and one
With worldly glorie and great preeminence
Bulwarked castels townes of myghty defence
Subdued the danes .vii. tymes in batell
Encreased his realme manfully and well.

That tyme the realme of mericiens was translate
By the kyng / and gyuen to duke Ethelrede
A noble man of auncetre / politicke and fortunate
Whiche married his syster lady Elflede
Doughter to the forsaide valiant kyng Alurede
The sayd gentilman was wyse and vertuous
Sad and discrete pacient and famous

This lady Elflede duchesse of mericiens
Had speciall loue and singular affection
To blessed Werburge and true confidence
Wherefore she mynded with great dilectacion
To edifie a mynstre a place of deuotion
To this holy virgin for profite of her soule
Enlargynge the church of Peter and of Paule

She moued her husbände with great mekenes
To supplie the same dede of his charite
And diuers other nobles of theyr goodnes
For aide in that cause after their degree

Joyfull was the duke of the mocion gosse
Glad were the nobles within all the shire
To founde a mynstre after her desire

Afoze the holy roode in a table writen is
At saint Johans churche without the sayd cite
Howe that prince Edmund the thyrde son e wis
Of Edward senior true foundour shulde be
To whom lady Elisee was aunt by auncetre
So betwix twayne was founded in short space
An holy mynstre of vertue full and grace

They sende for masons bpon euery tyde
Counnyng in geometrie / the foundation to take
For a large mynstre longe hie and wyde
Substancially wrought / the best that they can make
To the honour of god / for saynt Werburge sake
At the est ende taken theyr sure foundation
Of the apostoles churche / ioynyng both as one

Whan it was edified / and curiously wrought
And all thyng ended / in goodly proporcion
Than riche enormentes were offred and brought
Of the said nobles with great deuocion
Temporall landes / rentes / possession
Were gyuen for euer to mayntayne the place
Of blessed Werburge by singular grace

Spirituall ministres were elect also
Secular chanons of great humilite
To synge and psalmodise our sauour bnto
Within the sayd mynstre haupnge a perpetuite

Prebendes were assigned to that fraternite
With townes / borowes / and fredomes manifest
Continuallie encreasynge vnto the conquest

And the olde churche of Peter and of Paule
By a generall counsell of the spiritualte
With helpe of the duke moost principall
Was translate to the myddes of the sayd cite
Where a parreshe churche was edified truele
In honour of the aforesayd apostoles twayne
Whiche shall for ever by grace diuine remayne

Also we may note holdyng none opinion
This lady Elisede of her charite
Of the sayd mother churche translate the patron
Caused the sayd oratorie reconciled to be
In the honour of the most blessed trinite
And of saynt Oswalde martyr and kyng
For the loue she had to hym continuynge

The yere of our lorde .ix. hundreth and .liii.
This noble duchesse with mycle royalte
Reedified Chestre / and fortified it full ryght
Churche / house / and wall decayed piteousle
Thus brought vnto ryne was Chestre cite
First by Ethelfride kyng of Northumberlande
And by danes / norwaies beeryng all Englande

Also she enlarged this sayd olde cite
With newe myghty walles stronge all about
Almost by proporcion double in quantite
To the forther byldynge brought without dout

She compassed in the castell enemies to hold out
Within the sayd Wallles to defend the towne
Agaynst danes and walshemē to deuyt them all downe

After the deth of her husband Ethelrede
She ruled the realme of mercelande manfully
Buylded churches / and townes repared in dede
As Staford / Warwike / Chomwort / and Shirisbury
Of newe she edified Kincorn and Edisbury
The body of saynt Oswald also she translate
From Bardeney to Gloucetur there to be translate

Where she edified a noble monastery
With licence of her brother afore nominate
In honour of saint Peter / ouer the blessed body
Of the sayd saint Oswald / kyng and martyr coronate
In wiche monastery this lady was translate
The pere of our lorde .ix. hundredeth and nyntene
Whom myn auctour prayseth in this wordes serene
Henric° .li. b.

O Elleda potens / o terror birgo birorum :
Actrix nature nomine digna biri.
Te quoq; splendidior fecit natura puellam
Te probitas fecit nomen habere biri.
Te mutare docet sed solum nomina sexus
Tu regina potens / rerq; trophea parans
Jam nec cesarei tant meruere triumphii
Caesare splendidior birgo birago . Vale.

¶ Of the notable myracles of saynt Werburge shewed
in the tyme of chanons / and fyrst howe she saued Chest
from distruction of walshemen Cap. b.

This glorious Werburge and birgin pure
By singular grace of god omnipotent
Shewed many myracles to euerie creature
To blynde / dombe / halt / lame / and impotent
In the cite of Chestre / whan her thyne was present
Like wyse as in her lyfe at Wledon / at Hambury
Witneseth the same her true legende and history

Where to the honour / prayse / and laudacion
Of Jesu / the seconde persone in trinite
And of this birgin a speciall commendacion
The purpose to reherse nowe with charite
Under the protection of you that shall the reders be
Parte of the myracles / with mynde diligent
In this humble stile / and sentence consequent

The first myracle / that our blessed sauour
Shewed for his spouses / after her translation
To Chestre : was nye the tyme of Edward senour
Son to kyng Alured famous of renoune
The Name of britons was chaunged that season
Were named walschemen in the montaynes segregate
Euer to the saxons haurynge inwarde hate

The Walschemen that tyme had ouer them a kyng
Called Griffinus / to be theyr gouernour
Elected by the comons their appetite solowynge
Endurate with malice / couetise and rancour
Enemies to englisschemen / as is said before
This kyng entended by mortall enuy
The cite of Chestre to spoyle and distraye
Werburge.

O.i.

A myghty host discednd from the mountans
Well armed and strongly approachng the cite
Prepared for batell with them great ordinaunce
The sayd Griffinus and all his company
With his power passed ouer the water of Dee
Whiche ryuer adioynneth to the sayd towne
Betwene Englande and Wales a sure diuision

This kyng layd siege vnto Chestre cite
With all his great host / there honour to wyn
By policie of warre / encreasynge myghtyle
for whiche the citezens remainyng within
were sore disconsolate like for to twyn
With wofull heuy hartes they dyd call and crye
Upon blessed Werburge for helpe and remedye

The charitable chanons with great deuocion
Toke the holy thyrne of theyr patrones
Set it on the towne walles for helpe and tuicion
Trustynge on her to be saued from distres
But one of the ennemyes with great wychednes
Smot the sayd thyrne in castyng of a stone
And it empaired / piteous to loke vpon

Anone great punysshement vpon them all lyght
The kyng and his host were smytten with byndnes
That of the cite / they had no manner of syght
And he that smote the holy thyrne doubteles
Was greuously bered with a sprite of darkenes
And with hidous payne expired miserably
The kyng was sore adred / and all his company

Shortly the kynge remoued his great host
 Departed from the cite without any praye
 And gaue in commaundement in euery coost
 Saynt Werburge landes to meyntheyne alway
 Assigned her possessions euer after that day
 With the signe of the crosse a token euident
 In pleasynge this virgin / for drede of punysshement.

C. Howe saynt Werburge cured and healed a woman
 thre tymes (whiche was halte and lame) to helth and p-
 prosperite agayne. Cap. bi.

In the cite of Chestre (the legende doth expresse)
 An honest matrone dwelled / Egidia nominat
 Whiche by continuance / and payne of sickenes
 Was made halt and lame / of helth all desperate
 yet to saynt Werburge her hart was eleuate
 Instantly required with humble supplicacion
 This holy virgin for helth / and preseruacion

Anone by the merite of this lady clere
 The pacient restored to helth and prosperite
 Gaue honour and thanks to Werburge and prayer
 Entendynge euer after her true seruaunt to be
 And truely continue lyuynge in pure chastite
 But shortly she brake her promise made insyght
 folowynge her appetite and carnall lustes full ryght

She had great riches welth and prosperite
 And married with pleasure after her entencion
 Where thies she endured her olde infirmite
 And thies was cured by meke intercession
 Werburge. o.ii.

To helth of body from peynfull contraction
Thus by the merite of this virgin pure
She was deliuered from peyne thies to pleasure

This forsayd Gadgide prudently pondering
These notable miracles with her goffly eye
Gauē great cōmendacion and speciall thankynge
To almyghty god / with feruent humilite
And to saynt Werburge knelynge on kne
Came to her oratorie and gauē an oblacion
To the holy thyrne with singular deuocion

C. Howe saynt Werburge saued Chestre from innume-
rable barbarike nacions / purposynge to dystrope and
spoyle the sayd cite vtterly Cap.vii.

A Nother tyme innumerable barbarike nacions
Came to spoyle Chestre to robbe it and distry
(Sayth the hystorie) from diuers regions
Harolde kyng of danes / the kyng of gotes & galwed
Maucolyn of Scotlande and all theyr company
With baners displayed well armed to fyght
Theyr tentes rially in hoole heth were pyght

They set theyr ordinaunce agaynst the towne
Upon every side / timorous for to se
Namely at the northgate they were redy bowne
By myght police to haue entred the cite
The citezens dredynge to be in captiuite
Made intercession vnto this holy abbasse
For theyr deliuerance in suche extreme case

The deuout chanoys sette the holy shryne
Agaynst theyr enemies at the sayd northgate
Trustyng to Werburge to saue them from ruyne
And shewe some myracle to them disconsolate
For the citezens were of their lyues desperate
Passyng mannes mynde to escape theyr daunger
But all only by merite of this virgin clere

As the kynges were sautyng this forsayd cite
Trustyng for a praye to haue it every hour
One of the sayd enemies replet with iniquite
Nat worthypppyng y^r virgin / nor dyedyng our sauiour
Smote this riall relique with a stone in his rancour
Broke therof a corner curiously wrought
Cast all to the grounde : than sorowe came vnought

The sayd malefactour nat passyng the place
Clered with the deuill for his greuous offence
Rooyng and yellyng his outrageous trespass
Toke his tonge a sonder in wodely violence
A miserable expired afore them in presence
Satan ceased nat to shewe great punishment
Upon his soule and body / by signes euident

These kynges consideryng this soden vengeance
Amonge them all lyght so soone and hastily
Shortly remoued theyr great ordinaunce
Departed from the cite with theyr company
Callyng on this virgin fast for grace and mercy
Promyttynge neuer after to retourne agayne
To disquiete her seruauntes and cite in certayne
Werburge a.iii.

C. Howe saynt Werburge by her merite sent frute to a
barrayne woman by syngular praper made unto her
The .iiii. chapitre.

A Noble gentilman / a consul in office
Descendynge of the hie and riall blodde of costly
Elected a spouses at his owne device
A swete faire gentilwoman curtes and comly
Dominat Judith / ioynted to hym in matrimony
With whom this lady lyued a longe season
Barrayn and fruteles of generacion

She daily lamented her great wretchednes
As woman infortunate full of miserye
Prayed to saynt Werburge with interiour mekenes
For remedy and helpe agaynst that woful infamye
Desired to haue issue and frute of her bodye
If it pleased god / and this virgin also
Most greattest comfort to brynge her hert from wo

Saynt Werburge appered to her in vison
In white bright vesture / clere as the cristall
Expreslynge wordes of great consolacion
Most ioyfull to Judith to make reherfall
Commaundynge her by the effect speciall
To go to her churche with singular deuocion
And praye our sauour with humble supplicacion

Also for to compasse her holy aulter
With a linen cloth / knelyng on her kne
And after for to take the same cloth in fer^e
And compas her wombe about reuerentle

This Judith was ioyfull / and rose by yerle
And truely fulfilled this godly vision
From thens departed to her propre mansion

Soone after this wyfe afore reherled
Conceyued a childe and had succession
Praylyng this virgin in hart worde and dede
And after the tyme of her purification
Of the same faire cloth she made oblacion
Richely set in syluer / well wrought in compas
With many riche enornentes she sende to this place

After came herselfe vnto the monastery
With many of her neyghbours / ther^e nye dwellyng
Praylyng and laudyng this glorious lady
With cordiall thankynge makynge theyr offeryng
Of this great myracles true witnes bearyng
Departed from the place with ioy and deuocion
All the sayd company / eche to theyr mansion.

C. Of a woman great with childe with peyne brought
out of her wytte / by saynt Werburge was restoured to
reason agayne. Cap. ix.

In the prouince of Cheshire / knowen it is of olde
A certayne man dwelled / of great honeste
Whiche had a daughter disposed manyfolde
To sondre vertues / clennes / and humilite
This humble mayde ioyned was in matrimonye
To an honest yong man / of whom she conceyued
And was great with childe / openly perceyued

When the tyme approached of her deliuerance
Tered she was with myle two and payne
Continuallly enduryng / with suche hidous greuaunce
That out of her mynde she went incertayne
All phisike and medicyns were founde to her in bayne
No comfort in erth helpe nor remedye
For her myght be founde in suche extremitie

Her father and mother / and her frendes all
Brought they dere doughter with great deuotion
To saynt Werburge churche / requirynge speciall
This blessed birgin / with humble incescession
To helpe the pacient from all vexacion
Prompttynge an oblacion to this lady bryght
When she vnto reason were comen a ryght

And as she slepped at the autler ende
Wofullly cruciat with peynes hiduous
Passyng mannes cure it for to amende
Anone by the merite of this birgin glorious
She was released from all payne greuous
And fully restored to her reason agayne
Had good deliuerance / and spedde well in certayne

Whiche myracle knowen / her frendes euerychone
And all the good matrons of the sayd cite
Came holly togyther with theyr oblacion
To the holy thryne thankynge with hart fre
This blessed birgin of her benigneite
Whiche is so redy a mediatrice al way
To helpe her true seruauntes both nyght and day

**C. Howe an other woman vnlawfully wurkyng was
made blynde / and by saynt Werburge restored was to
her syght agayne. Cap. x.**

**Within the same cite afore the abbay gate
Dwelled a woman / which brake the comaundement
Of god and holy churche / hys sabbot day dyd violate
Vnlawfully wurkyng : wherfore great punysshement
fell vpon this woman with peynes equiualent
Sodaynly smytten / wurkyng full busely
With greuous blyndnes / and mycle miserye**

**This woman consyderyng her syght was gone
The pleasure of this worlde her helpe and succour
Hauyng to lyue by / small riches or none
Cried maynly out out alas euery hour
Who is me wretche fulfylled with dolour
Alas I was borne to abyde this wofull day
My maker to displease / alas what shall I say :**

**She called to memorie with hys discrecion
The myracles that Werburge shewed to mankynde
By grace she repented / with suche contricion
That water distilled from her eyes blynde
Dolefully lamentyng / that she was so vnhynde
Ruthfully was brought to Werburge oratory
Trustyng in this birgin to haue remedy**

**As she continued in her supplicacion
Wofully wepyng / abidyng the great grace
Of blessed Werburge / with singular inuocacion
Anone she was cured to helth and solace
Werburge p.i.**

Restored to her eyesight / she passed the place
Prayed our lorde and this virgin pure
Was a holy woman after ye may be sure.

C. How saint Ulterburge restored to helth and pſperite
bi. lame and halt pſons by ſingular grace. Cap. xi.

The excellent fame of this glorious lady
Dilated was through all this region
Mañifest by myacles full honorably
Therefore from diuers partes came many a person
For helth of body and godly conuerſacion
Some to be cured from payne intollerable
And some of oldsores that were incurable

Amonge whom there came vnto her place
Sire woſfull perſones / cured for to be
Halt blynde and lame beſekyng her of grace
With humble ſupplicacion vpon them haue pite
With wepyng treares ſayenge / o ſouerayn ladie
O imperiall princeſſe / and kynges doughter dere
Heele our diſeaſe by thy iñſtant prayer

O bleſſed virgin and holy moimiall
O glorious abbaffe / and worthy gouernour
O pereles parens and miniſtre ſpirituall
O celeſſiall gemme reſplendent with honour
Praye for vs wretches vnto our ſauour
That we may opteyne here mercy and grace
Cured of our ſekenes / after to ſe thy face

Thy name transcendeth this realme ſwete lady

Thy myracles magnifyen thy great goodnes
Thy worshipp encreaseeth with honour and glorie
Daily euermore through thy great holynes
Shewe nowe thy power / cure vs from sekenes
That by the we may prayse the kyng of blis
As thou hast cured manypone of this

By these meke prayers / in hert full penitent
And many other orisons sayd priuately
Callyng on this birgin with deuocion feruent
For certayne / or they passed the monastery
They were all cured from peyne and malady
In wytnes wherof / and triall as it was
They staues remainned longe after in the place

C Howe a yonge man thries hanged vnlawfully Was
thries deliuered by saynt Werburge from dethe to lyfe
and lyberte. Cap. xii.

A Lmyghty god gaue in commaundement
By moises lawe / to his people echone
No innocent to flee by wrongfull iudgement
Nor causeles to punyshe by greuous oppression
Also to beware of lyght suspexion
Wherof a myracle we shall nowe expresse
Done in Chestre cite by Werburge theyr patronesse

A certayne yonge man dwelled in the cite
Honest in maners / and of good conuersacion
Disposed to vertue and humilite
Was arrest and taken of a lyght suspicion
By the officers and rules of the sayd towne
Werburge. p. ii.

Gyltles accused most innocently
Condemned and iudged to deth shamfully

After sentence gyuen / ministres were all redy
Upon the iudgement to do execucion
He was fettred and brought to the gebbet by and by
And as a stronge thefe hanged therupon
His frendes and colyns for hym made great mone
Alas what tongue myght expresse the wo
They made that tyme departynge hym fro

And as this innocent hang in his payne
He called to mynd the manyfolde goodnes
The myracles of Werburge shewed her certayne
Howe she had saued many in great distress
So whan he myght no wordes expresse
In mynde he required her / and humblie dyd pray
From shamfull deth to saue hym that day

Whan all the officers departed were thens
Supposynge the soule seperate from the body
A white doue descended afore them in presence
And lyght vpon the gebbet immediatly
The byrde with his byll brake the rope truely
The prisoner escaped that tyme from deth
Shortly reuiuyng toke naturall bryeth

Whiche thyng notified so meruailous in syght
The ministers returned / they labour in bayne
Toke this innocent by power and myght
Upon the sayd gebbet hanged hym agayne
Thus he was deliuered by myracle from payne

The tortuous turmentours celled their tyranny
Permytted the prisoner to go at liberte

Whiche myracle knowen / his frendes and cosyns all
Returned agayne with glad mynde and chere
The prisoner mette them louyng god in speciall
And blessed Werburge in his best manere
The deuout citezens approched them nere
Went all to the thyne the birgin thankyng
The belles were tolled for ioy of this thyng

¶ Howe at the maner place of Upton saint Werburge
restrayned wyld horses from distruction of cornes put
in by theyr ennemyes. Cap. xiii.

Alto the thynde season approched to Chestre cite
Many cruell ennemyes in the part of Wirall
Purposyng to spoyle / and distroy all the countre
The people and theyr frutes / theyr corne and cattall
The citezens dredyng to be captiue and thral
Fortified the cite with men of armes bright
Hauynge sure artillarie for to defende and fight

The husbandes of the countrey about there dwelllyng
Agaynst the sayd ennemyes makynge sore prouysion
Brought thei corne & cattell / their husold remaynyng
In assurance to be / to the parke of Upton
Saynt Werburge landes from all distruction.
Whiche parke from Upton was distaunt a myle space
A prebende to a chanon of her mynstre and place

These Wyched ennemies fulfilled with malice
Werburge. p. iiii.

Agaynst all conscience and ordre of charite
In no maner wise dredynge the hie iustice
Entred the sayd parke with mycle cruelte
Pulled downe the paaile at pleasure and liberte
But in theyr horses made great distruction
Of cornes and catell of a hie presumption

Werburge remembryng thei great wychednes
Thei malice and myschief agaynst her possession
By myracle shewed her power and goodnes
Preseruyng her seruauntes from all veracion
And punysshing her enemies with great affliction
As she hath done many seasons of this
By mean to her spouse our lorde kyng of blis

When the corne sheuys lay broken afore them playne
The horses had no power any part to take
For why? by myracle / theyr heedes all in certayne
Were byholde in the aye / theyr bodies sore dyd quake
They touched no frutes / wail they dyd none make
Of the principall doers / some raged out of mynde
Some smetyn with palsy / some lepre halt and blynde

Whiche punysshement knowen vnto all the host
The rulers and captens without any delaye
Knyt agayne the sheuys / that none shulde be lost
With tremblyng hartes humbly began to praye
This holy virgin to saue them that daye
Upon a condicion / escapyng from payne
Enduryng thei lyfe neuer to turne agayne

From that tyme furth ther dar^e no nacion

Consydering the power of this virgin pure
Approching Chestre cite to make derogacion
Denmarke Coet nor Galway scot ye may be sure
Cruell danes nor walthemen dare nat procure
Wherefore the citezens haue cause to loue the place
And thanke this virgin for her helpe and grace

¶ Howe a chanon of Chestre haupng his leg and the
broken was restaured to helth by laynt Werburge hys
patronesse. Cap. xiii.

Within Chestre mynstre that holy place
Dwelld a chanon nominate Alminus
Sad of disposicion by syngular grace
Humble and pacient / discrete and vertuous
Liberall and honest / gentyll and piteous
And for a pastyme this was his pleasure
To hunt and to hauke to comfort nature

And as this chanon rode for his solace
On huntynge with other honest company
By fortune unfrendly / the more pite was
Both horse and man fell to grounde sodenly
In perill of theyr lyues standynge in ieopardye
The horse downe lyenge oppressed the chanon
Broke his leg a sondre / with blod great effusion

When by his company the chanon was by take
He fell in a swoone for anguill he wo and payne
All worldly riches redy to forsake
For one hour of quietnes to be had agayne
Unto his mancion they brought him certayne
Werburge. p.iiii.

Where he continued in mycle wo and langour
Abydyng allonly the mercy of our sauour

Coūnyng surgeans were sought bpon euery syde
To cure this gentylman from penalite
But none of them / by wysdome coude prouyde
Clere to heele hym / and do hym remedye
Thus he remediles / in extreme ieopardye
Prayed to saynt Werburge his patronesse
For helth and remedye / of her great goodnesse

Whose humble prayer with inward loue feruent
Was graciously harde of her charite
For right soone after appered euident
A byde like a doue most clere for to see
Into the chanons chambre the byde flow trule
Among the company / and anone doubtles
The place was repleit with odour and swetnes

Soone after the company euerichone
Were sadly on slepe a thyng meruaylous
And afore the pacient by playne vison
Saynt Werburge appered in his syght full glorious
Sayeng : my chaplayne and seruaunt vertuous
Why be ye absent from diuine seruice
Nat doyng your dutie accordyng to iustice

Ala dame he sayd / and swete president
It is well knowen to all the cite
Of my myffortune and harmes euident
Howe my horse almost had oppressed me
Wherefore an impotent I endure mysere

It is no feyned cause / that I do expresse
I beseke you of helpe nowe swete maistres

Saynt Werburge euer piteous and merciabie
Upon her seruantes in great distresse
Conforted her chaplayne with wordes delectable
Proued in effect by her excellent goodnes
To his syght and felynge as he dyd expresse
She touched the foote / that sore and broken was
Cured it holly from payne by singular grace

When she had cured thus this impotent
Anone she departed out of his syght
The chanon gaue honour to god omnipotent
And to this virgin and lady bygyght
Of this godly vision comfort and lyght
All payne was past sekeneſs beracion
Helth was come by playne probacion

The chanon rose by the same mydryght
And went to mattens as custome was
His bretherne were glad with all theyr myght
Praised our lorde of his singular grace
And Werburge patrones of the sayd place
Also with honour reuerence and humilite
The bretherne sange te deum solemne

¶ A brefe rehersall of certayne kynges / and how kyng
Edgar came to Chestre. Also howe Leofrice Erle of
Chestre repared diuers churches. Cap.xv.

After the deceſſe of kyng Edward senour
Ethelstan his sonne was coronate at London

Kyng of this lande requyng in honour
With power regalite by true succession
Valeant in chivalry and actes euerychone
Subdued danes / scottes / norwayes / britons all
Optyned triumphe / and dignite imperiall

The fourth yere of his reigne / and the yere of grace
biii. hundreth .ii. and seuenty by full computacion
Guy erle of Marwike by fortune slayne hase
Colbrond the gyaunt / floure of danes nacion
The sayd kyng Ethelstan by power and renowne
Thries subdued danes / and slewe the kyng of Irelāde
Nominat prince Anlaff as we vnderstande

This noble Ethelstan was good and gracious
To all holy churche / namely to religion
Ryghtfull in iudgement / liberall and piteous
To his true subiectes through his dominion
To mynstres and holy places had great affection
Confirmed theyr foundations with libertes clere
Whose noble actes be touched a lytell here

*Regia progenies produxit nobile stemma.
Cum tenebris nostris illuxit splendida gemma
Magnus Ethelstanus patrie decus, orbita recti
Illustris probitas a vero nescia flecti.*

After Ethelstan regned Edmunde his brothur
Fyue yeres in honour / hauyng great victory
Princis Eired and Edwyn succided epytherothur
In great busines with scottes and danes truly
Next whom meke Edgar / sayth the history
xvi. yere of age / coronate at Kyngston
With peace and quietnes first ruled this region.

In whose nativite the blessed Dunstan
Herde angels singe with mycle melody
Peace is now come to Englande certain
Quietnes / and rest / honour / and victory
Of cornes and frutes that tyme was plentie
Danes / norwaies / scottes / britons in every place
Submytted them selfe to the kynges grace

Science encreased true loue and amite
Vertue was exalted in all this region
Monasteries were edified of his benigne
Endowed with riches / and riall possession
In religious places by famous opinion
Were newly buylded by the sayd noble kyng
In sondry places of this realme standyng

Secular prestes expelled sothely were
From diuers monasteries with great discrecion
Religious persones repleit with bertue clere
Entred their places cause of deuocion
Charite was feruent and holy religion
The lyues of sayntes were soth in eche place
And written in legendes for our comfort and grace

Many shypys were made vpon the kynges cost
To serche by the se all his lande about
That no alian entre in no maner cost
By policie and manhod to holde all his ennemies out
Danes / norwaies / scottes durst nat ones loke out
Suche drede all nations had ensuyng the tyme
That kyng Edgar regned by prouidence diuine
In progresse he passed ones in the yere
Eche quarter of the realme with his company

To se that his subiectes well ordred were
And the lawe obserued / iustice with mercy
Than was none oppression wronges nor iniury
Debate malice rancour myght nat be founde
True loue and charite was in all the londe

Kynge Edgar^e approached the cite of legions
Nowe called Chelstre / specified afore
Where .viii. kynes mette of diuers nations
Redy to gyue Edgare reuerence and honour
Legiance and fidelite depely sworne full soe
At the same cite : after to be obedient
Promyt at his calling to come to his parliament

From the Castell he went to the water of Dee
By a priue posturne through walles of the towne
The kyng toke his barge with mycle rialte
Rowyng bpwarde to the churche of saynt Iohn
The forsayd .viii. kynes with hym went alone
Kynge Edgar^e kept the storne / as most principall
The prince had an oze to labour withall

When the kyng had done his pylgrimage
And to the holy roode made oblacion
They entred agayne into the sayd barge
Passyng to his place with great renowne
Than Edgare spake in prayfynge of the crowne
All my successours may glad and ioyfull be
To haue suche homage honour and dignite

Also it is to be had in memory
That this sayd Edgar^e and his princis all

Came with great reuerence vnto the monastery
To worshyp saynt Werburge with mynde liberall
Where he gaue freedoms and priuileges speciall
With singular possessions of his charite
Confirmynge the olde grauntes by hye auctorite

This Edgar^o was nominate in cronicles expresse
The floure of Englade / regnyng as emperour
Lyke wise as Romulus to romains was of prowes
Cyrus to the persis / to the grekes their conquerour
Great Charles to frenchemen / to troians Hector
Famous in victorie preignant in wysdome
Vertuous and pacient / feruent in deuocion
Henric^o. li. b.

Auctor opum vindixit scelerum / largitor honorum
Sceptringer Edgarus regna superna petit.
Hic alter Solomon / legum pater / orbita pacis
Quod claruit bellis / claruit inde magis.
Templa deo / tēplis monachos / monachis dedit agros :
Requitie lapsum / iusticieq; locum.

Also from the byrthe of our blessed sauour
A thousande fyfty yere / and seyn expresse
In the tyme of saynt Edwarde kyng and confessor
As William Maluesbury beareth wytnes
Chan Leofricus a man of great mekenes
Was erle of Chestre and duke of merciens
Son to duke Leoffwin by liniall descence

This noble Leofric sayth policronicon
Of his deuocion and beningne grace

**Namely by the counsell and bertues mocion
Of his lady Godith countes whiche was
Reedified churches decayed in many a place
Also he founded the monastery of Leonence
By the towne of Herford / and the place of Wenlece**

**This erle repareled a noble olde monastery
Eueham ypon Auen / gaue them great riches
Also founder was of the abbay in couentre
Made the cite free for loue of his countesse
At the cite of Chestre of his great goodnes
He repared the College church of saynt Iohn
Endowed it with riches and enormentes many one**

**This erle of Chestre the sayd Leofricus
Of his charite / and feruent deuocion
To the honour of god / reedified full gracious
The mynstre of Werburge within the sayd towne
Gaue unto it riches and singular possession
Endowed the sayd place with fredoms and liberte
And speciall priuileges confirmed by auctoite**

**So the sayd place encreased in honour
In great possessions / fredoms / and richesse
With singular deuocion vnto our sauour
And prayse to saynt Werburge theyr patronesse
The chanons obserued bertue and clemmes
Daily augmentyng by diuine sufferauce
Vnto the comyng to this lande of normans**

**¶ Of the comyng of Willjam conquerour to this lade
and howe Hug. Lupe his syster soune was founder of**

The yere of grace .M. lxx and thescour
 The .xiii. day of the moneth of october
 The duke of Normandy / William conquerour
 Ficht a stronge batell / displayed his baner
 Of normans and frenchemen hauynge great power
 Subdued kyng Harold / opteyned all the londe
 Was coronate at London / made saxons all bonde

for diuerse great causes he came to this countre
 first for deth of Alured his nere kynsman
 The proscription of Robert archebischop of Cant bury
 The periury of Harold agaynst conscience playne
 The promys of saynt Edward made to hym certayne
 That the sayd William shulde enioye the crowne
 If the kyng departed without succession

A generall counsell was celebrate at London
 That all bysshops sees by helpe of the conquerour
 From borowes shulde be translate to a famous towne
 Within their diocess / to the greater honour
 Ryght so they all were / sayth myn auctour
 Also the see of Lichfeld / was translate to Chester
 By helpe and sufferance of the bysshop Peter

With William conquerour came to this region
 A noble worthy prynce nominate Hug. Lupus
 The dukes son of Britayne / and his syster son
 Flourynge in chivalry bolde and victorious
 Manfull in batell / liberall and bertuous
 To whom the kyng gaue for his enheritaunce

The counte of Cheshhire with the appurtinaunce

**By victorie to wyne the forsayd Erledom
Frely to gouerne it as by conquest right
Made a sure chartre to hym and his succession
By the swerde of dignite to holde it with myght
And to calle a parlement to his wyl and syght
To orde his subiectes after true iustice
As a prepotent prince / and statutes to deuise**

**This baleant knyght with a myghty host
Descended from London to wyne the sayd counte
But the lordes of Cheshhire rose from euery cost
Agaynst hym made batell and had the victorie
Thies they preuayled agaynst the erle trulie
After he optayned to his fame and honour
The erledom of Cheshire entred as a conquerour**

**He gaue to his knyghtes after theyr desire
Lordshypps and franchises / and great possession
With riche mariages within all Cheshhire
Exalted his seruauntes to hye promocion
Unto holy churche had special deuocion
Maynteynge iustice / commendying bertue
Deposyng vice by the helpe of Jesu**

**After the departure of his vncl the conquerour
Whan William Ruff. toke the regalite
Than blessed Anselme the famous doctour
Wyd viset this lande oft tymes of his charite
Glad to refourme / and bynge into unite
Where was debate / and mycle diuision**

By diligent labour and good exhortacion

This forsayd erle of his benigne
Interiorly lounge holy religion
Repleit with vertue and feruent charite
Sende for saynt Anselme vnto London
To come to Chestre at his petition
And there for to founde a religious place
In honour of Werburge by diuine grace

Blessed Anselme at the erles supplicacion
Came vnto Chestre with gladde chere shortly
Where he founded an abbaye of holy religion
A pleasaunt place and a noble monasterye
In worshyp of god / and saynt Werburge sothely
The yere of grace by full computacion
A thousande .iiii. score .xiii. yere alon

All secular prestes / and chanons also
Within the sayd place afore tyme dwelling
Were clerely dysmyssed / and letten go
Religious monkes perfect in luyng
Receyued were gladly their rule professyng
Saynt Anselme ordeyned Ric^e of Beccents
To be their abbot with great preeminence

Landes / rentes / libertes / and great possession
Franches / fredoms / and priuileges riall
Were gyuen mekely to that foundation
Maners / borowes / townes / with the people thall
And many faire churches / chapels withall
Wardes and mariages were gyuen that season
Werburge. q.i.

To god and saynt Werburge cause of deuocion

Kyng Wyllyam Ruff. son to the conquerour
Confirmed the foundacion / with great auctorite
Endowed the monastery with mycle honour
Of fredoms / franchises / also liberte
The place that tyme was made as fre
As the sayd erle was in his castell
Or as hert myght thynke / or tonge myght tell

Saynt Anselme departed thence vnto London
And was made archebischop of Canturbury
To the place he gaue a sure confirmacion
With singular priuileges to be had in memory
Of whom it is written here folowynge truly
Dic bit dum bixit extirpantes maledixit
Werburge iura presentia sine futura.

This noble prince gaue of his charite
Riall riche enormentes vnto the sayd place
Coopes / crosse / Jewels of great rialte
Chales / censures / bestures / and landes dyd purchase
A librarie of bokes to rede and synge there was
Of whiche riall iewels and bokes some remayne
Within the sayd monastery to this day certayne

The founder also buylded within the monastrie
Many myghty places / conuenient for religion
Compased with stronge walles on the west partie
And on the other syde with Walles of the towne
Closed at euery ende with a sure postron
In south part the cimiterie inuironed rounde about

for a sure defence enemies to holde out

The .ix. yere after this riall foundation
This noble founder the .xxvii. day of July
Departed towards the heuently mansion
Next whom his son Richarde succeeded truly
Then regnyng in honour the first kyng Henry
Also the place had their franchises and freedom
Afore the sayd cite a hundreth yere and one

¶ Howe saynt Werburge taught her monke and cha-
playne to kepe paciens for his greater merite and glo-
rye to come. Cap. xvii.

After the translacon of Chestre monasterye
From secular chanons to monkes religious
By helpe of Anselme archebisschop of Canturburge
Supportyng therto the founder Hug. Lupus
As afore is specified full memorous
A monke there dwelled of vertuous disposicion
Under obedience / nominate dan Symon

This brother Simon his tyme well byng
Nowe in vertuous study / nowe in contemplacion
Nowe in deuout prayer / nowe busely wryttinge
Somtyme in solace / and honest recreation
Observed deuoutly his holy religion
Obedience / pacience / and wylfull pouerte
Akenes / meditacion / with pure chastite

For whiche examples and signes of vertue
Diuers of his bretherne repleit with enuy
Were fully confederate entending to subdue
This honest prest by malice and policy
Werburge. q.ii.

They layd to his charge open wronges and iniury
They punysshed & oppressed hym with great affliction
Dayly augmentyng by subtyll collusion

Dan Symon offendyng no brother at all
Observed pacience / euer callynge for grace
Weeping lamentyng with syghes cordiall
His fortune unfrendly remediles / in that case
Entended to depart to some other place
Of a scrupulous conscience / seyng no redresse
Was redy to procede plunged in heuynesse

Merburge appered to this monke in vision
Bryghter than Phebus in his meridian spere
My seruaunt she sayd callyng hym vpon
Why be ye so sad / and heuy of chere ?
Wheder entende ye ? shewe the mater clere
Alas he sayd ma dame and patronesse
For sorowe I can nat my peynes expresse

Diuers of my betherne ben greued at me
Terryng me dayly with great tribulacion
Causeles on my part deserued trile
In worde or en dede grynng none occasion
I can nat be quiet amonge that congregacion
Wherefore swete lady vnder your licence
I purpose to departe in sauyng my conscience

Saynt Merburge pacified his mynde and entent
With wordes of comfort and holy scripture
Made hym be humble in hert and patient
Thy sufferance shalbe great ioye and pleasure

And for thy pacience thou maist be sure
To haue rewarde in blis perpetuall
At thy departure from this lyfe mortall

Wherwith saynt Werburge departed sodeinl
To the blis of heuyn euer enduryng
The monke was meke in hert and mery
Observed her doctrine this lyfe continuyng
Gave good example of perfect lyuynge
Unto his bretherne / and at his departure
For his pacience passed to eternall pleasure

¶ Howe sondes rose vp within the salt see agaynst Hil
burgher by saynt Werburge at the petition of the con-
stable of Chestre. Ca.xviii.

THe seconde erle of Chestre after the conquest
Was erle Richard / son to Hug. Lupus
Whiche Richarde entended all thyng to the best
To visite saynt Winifride in hert desirous
Upon his iourney went / myn auctour sayth thus
Deuoutly to holy well in pylgrimage
For his great merite and godly aduantage

When the wicked walshe-men herd of his comyng
After a meke maner vnto that party
They made insurrection inwardly gladdying
Descended from the mountaynes most furiously
Agaynst the erle raised a cruell company
Bytwt hym and Chestre lettynge the kyngis way
Purposynge to flee or take hym for a praye
Werburge. q.iii.

The erle son perceyued theyr malicious entent
In all hast possible sende to Chestre secretly
To warne his constable by loue and commaundment
Wylliam the son of Wigell / to rayse a great army
To mete hym at Balyngwerke right sone and spedely
For his deliuerance from deth and captiuite
Of the wyld walshemen / without humanite

The constable congregate in all goodly hast
A myghty stronge host / in theyr best arraye
Towarde Hilburghie on iourney ridyng fast
Trustyng vpon shippes all them to conuaye
Whiche was a riall rode that tyme nyght and daye
And whan they theder came shyping none there was
To carie all them ouer in conuenient space

Alas what hert may thynke / or tonge well expresse ?
The dolorous greuaunce / and great lamentacion
That the host made / for loue and tendernes
Knowyng their great maister in suche persecucion
Some wept and wayled without consolacion
Some sighed and sobbed / some were in extasy
Without perfect reason / alas what remedy ?

Wylliam the constable most carefull man on lyue
Of his myffortune in suche extreme necessite
Called to hym a monke there dwelling contemplatyue
Required hym for counsayle and prayer for his charite
The monke exhorted hym to knele vpon his kne
Humble to beseke Werburge his patronesse
For helpe and remedy in suche great distresse

The constable content anone began to praye
O blessed Merburge and virgin pure
I beseeke the mekely helpe me this day
That we may transcende this ryuer safe and sure
To saue and defende my lorde from discomfiture
And here I promytte to god and the alone
To offre to the a gyfte at my comyng whome

Whiche prayer ended with wepyng and langour
Beholde and consyde well with your gostly ee
The infinite goodnes of our sauiour
For like as to Moyses deuided the redde see
And the water of Jordan obeyed to Josue
Ryght so the depe riuer of Dee made diuision
The sondes dye appered in syght of them echone

The constable consyderynge / and all the company
This great myracle transcendyng nature
Praised and magnified our lorde god almyghty
And blessed Merburge the virgin pure
They went into wales vpon the sondes sure
Deliuered their lorde from drede and enmite
Brought hym in safe garde agayne to Chestre cite

The sayd Wyllyam constable came to the monasterye
Thanked saynt Merburge with meke supplicacion
Fulfylled his promes made in extremite
Offred to the place the billage of Neuton
Afterwarde he founded the abbay of Norton
And where the host passed / ouer betwix bondes
To this day ben called the constable sondes

T Howe Matild, countesse of Chestre counselleng her
husband, agaynst the monastery of Chestre was brow-
ned at Barlewe with many other mo. Cap. xix.

After the decesse of Hug. Lupe prenominate
Richard, his son .vii. yeres of age
Was elect Erle by the kyng and creat
With counsaile gouerned his landes and heritage
At yeres of discrecion he toke in mariage
The lady Matild / nece to the first kyng Henry
Doughter to erle Stephan (sayth the history)

At his begynnynge he was a benefactour
A founder to the place by landes and possession
By franchises and libertes / ayde / helpe / and succour
Gyuen to the abbay / augmentynge the foundation
Proued by his actes of singular deuocion
Endurynge long tyme / tyll that his lady
By wycked counsaile moued hym the contrarpe

It is red in scripture howe quene Iesabell
Ambitious of honour agaynst all ryghtousnes
Peruerted her lorde Ahas / kyng of Israell
To sle Nabath for his vineyard doubtes
Also Athalia / the bible sheweth expresse
Commaunded to sle the kynges children all
That she myght regne sole pryncesse imperiall

Ryght to this Matild, clerely refusynge
The steppes of Sara / Rebecca / and Rachell
And other good matrons : but mutacion takynge
Of these wycked women Athali and Iesabell

Peruerted her husbände by her subtyll counsell
To aske of the abbot the maner place of Salton
With the appurtinaunce by famous opinion

Thabbot by counsell of his betherne all
Denyed to graunt their propre possession
The patrimony of Christ and their landes seuerall
To the sayd erle Richarde and his succession
Gyuen by his father at the first foundacion
For whiche thyng the erle and Matild, his lady
Hated thabbot / his betherne / and the monastery

The erle and his countesse went to Normandy
To viset their frendes and cōsyns naturall
So dyd the pryncis / their father kyng Henry
With many estates of the blodde riall
These pryncis fauored no saxon at all
The erle conominat in malice and hate
Agaynst the monasterie / as a man endureate

Satan sende forth his seruauntes in hast
To enfect the erles hert with venomous poison
The bedyls of Belial attempted full fast
The erle and his countesse / to kepe theyr opinion
Detractours flaterers cause of promocion
Trustyng therby to opteyne fauour and grace
Excited their myndes agaynst the sayd place

The erle sore attempted by his goddly ennemy
By wycked people callyng hym vpon
Namely by the counsell of Matild, his lady
Entended to alter and chaunge the foundacion
Werburge

r.i

T Howe Matild, countesse of Cheshire counselleng her
husband, agaynst the monastery of Cheshire was brow-
ned at Barlewe with many other mo. Cap. xix.

After the deceasse of Hug. Lupe prenominate
Richard, his son .bii. yeres of age
Was elect Erle by the kyng and creat
With counsaile gouerned his landes and heritage
At yeres of discrecion he toke in mariage
The lady Matild / nece to the first kynge Henry
Doughter to erle Stephan (sayth the history)

At his begynnyng he was a benefactour
A founder to the place by landes and possession
By franchises and libertes / ayde / helpe / and succour
Gyuen to the abbay / augmentyng the foundacion
Proued by his actes of singular deuocion
Enduryng long tyme / tyll that his lady
By wyched counsaile moued hym the contrarpe

It is red in scripture howe quene Jhesabell
Ambitious of honour agaynst all ryghtousnes
Peruerterd her lorde Ahas / kyng of Israell
To sle Nabath for his vineyard doubtes
Also Athalia / the bible sheweth expresse
Commaunded to sle the kynges children all
That she myght regne sole princeesse imperiall

Ryght so this Matild, clerely refusyng
The steppes of Sara / Rebecca / and Rachell
And other good matrons : but mutacion takyn
Of these wyched women Athali and Jhesab

Perverted her husband's word: incontinent
To aske of the alder the name: ~~which was~~
With the appointment: ~~of her husband~~

Chabbot by counsel: ~~of his wife~~
Denyed to grant her: ~~what she desired~~
The patrimony of ~~his father~~: ~~and his~~
To the lady's rich husband: ~~and his~~
Given by his father: ~~at his death~~
For which dying the rich man: ~~had~~
Doted thither: ~~his wife~~: ~~and his~~

The rich and his wife: ~~and his~~
To let their friends: ~~and his~~
So had the young: ~~and his~~
Which many: ~~and his~~
Their money: ~~and his~~
The rich man: ~~and his~~
Against the: ~~and his~~

Satan sende forth his
To infect the rich man
The devils of hell
The rich and his
Detraction: ~~and his~~
Crushing: ~~and his~~
Crushed: ~~and his~~

The rich man
By his: ~~and his~~
Fame: ~~and his~~
Enter

2
temy

oman
and hour
incertain
at langour
r.ii.

Of the sayd abbay to a nother religion
Confirmed the same sweryng most depely
At his whom comyng to Englande / from Normandy

Chabbot and couent knowyng this great perell
By speciall louers and frendes secretly
Were penyue and sorowfull (it was no meruell)
Their hertes plunged in wo and misery
By naturall reason hauyng no remedy
Consydering his malice encreased more and more
Agaynst the monastery / with wordes of rigour

They had their hope trust and confidence
In blessed Werburge their patronesse
With wepyng eies clere in conscience
They called her vpon in all their distresse
O glorious birgin lady and swete maistres
Mitigate the malice by thy benignite
Of Richarde our lorde / mekely we praye the

Suffre hym neuer to distroye thy place
By wyched consell malice and enuy
founded and dedicate by heuenly grace
In honour of god / and the specially
Protect / defende / and saue thy monastery
Thy landes / thy libertes / and thy seruauntes all
As thou afore tyme hast done continuall

In meane tyme the erle entended spedely
from thens to depart / and retourne agayne
To fulfyll his entent agaynst the monasterye
By the subtyll mocion of his countesse playne

A ship was prepared / all thyng redy certayne
The prince of England / the erle and his lady
Toke shippying at Barlewe and all their comp

Certaynly they sayled but a lytell space
Whan agaynst them roose a contrarie wynde
The mariners to gyde the ship had no grace
The stormes so great hiduous agaynst kynde
On a rocke they ranne / no remedy myght fynde
Incontinently the ship barst all in sondre
The erle and his feliship were turned all undre

No man ne childe scaped from deth that tyme
But one pore seruaunt whiche swamme to the londe
Suche was theyr fortune by sufferaunce diuyn
Many of theyr bedis were neuer fonde
Thus was their power made thrall and bonde
Theyr lyues were lost within a lort space
Whiche were cruell ennemyes vnto her place

On saynt Katharins day at after mydnyght
Whan matens were ended / and bretherne gon
Some mournyng waylyng for drede full ryght
Some busie in prayer and contemplacion
Merburge appered to the secriffan alone
Sayenge : ye may be ioyfull in god and mery
Erle Richarde is drowned your mortall ennemy

The same glad tidyng she wed an honest woman
Collyng at the churche dore the sayd day and hour
As she was commaunded by Merburge incertan
To thabbot and couent plunged in great langour
Merburge. r.ii.

(Whiche myracle herde) they prayed our sauour
And blessed Werburge / with hert deuoutly
Synngng Te deum full solemply

¶ Howe a great fire like to dystroye all Chestre by my-
racle ceased / whan the holy thyrne was borne about the
towne by the monkes. Cap.xx.

From the incarnation of our sauour
A thousand / a hundreth yere .lxxx. also
On sonday in mydlentoun / the .iiii. hour^e
Whan euery paretthen theyr churche went to
As all christen people of dutie shulde do
A fyre by infortune rose up sodeinly
All flamyng feruent or the people dyd espy

This fearefull fire encreased more and more
Piteously wastyng hous / chambere / and hall
The citezens were redy their cite to succour
Shewed all their diligence / and labour continuall
Some cried for water / and some for hookes dyd call
Some bled other engins by crafte and policy
Some pulled downe howses afore the fire truly

Other that were impotent / mekely gan praye
Our blessed lorde / on them to haue pite
Women and children cried out and waile away
Beholdyng the daunger and perill of the cite
Prestes made hast diuine seruice to supple
Redy for to succour their neyghbours in distress
(As charite required) and helpe their heurnes

The fire continued without any cellynge
feruently flamyng euer continuall
from place to place meruaylously rennyng
As it were tynder consuming toure and wall
The citezens sadly laboured in hayne all
By the policie of man was founde no remedy
To cesse the fire so feruent and myghty

Alas great heuynes it was to beholde
The cite of Trope all flamyng as fire
More pite of Rome cite was manyfolde
feruently flagrant / empeiryng the empire
As to the quantite the cite of Cheshire
Myght be assembled this tyme in like case
To the sayd citees remedeles alas

Many riall places fell adowne that day
Riche marchauntes houses brought to distruction
Churches and chapels went to great decay
That tyme was bent the more part of the towne
And to this present day is a famous opinion
Howe a myghty churche a mynstre of saynt Michaell
That season was bent and to ruine fell

When the people sawe their power insufficient
By diligent labour / wysdome and policie
To subdue the fire / but still dyd augment
To almyghty god they dyd call and crye
And to saynt Werburge the gracious lady
for helpe and succour in suche wretchednes
Weppynge and warlyng for woo and heuynes
Werburge. r.iii.

Abbot and couent of the sayd monasterie
Religiously lyving in holy conuersacion
Repleit with mekenes and seruent charite
Toke the holy thyne in prayer and deuocion
Syngyng the letanie bare it in procession
Compasyng the fyre in euery strete and place
Trustyng in Uerburge for helpe aide and grace.

When they had ended the holy letanye
from place to place procedyng in stacion
Anone a stremyng sterre appered todaynlye
A white doue descended afore the congregacion
Approchyng as to helpe them / a signe of consolacion
The people reioysed of that gostly syght
And prayled saynt Uerburge with power and myght

So by the merite of this blessed birgin
The fire began to cesse / a myracle clere
That passyng the place / where the holy thyne
Was borne by the betherne / as playnly dyd appere
The citezens dyd helpe in their best manere
The seruent great fire extincted was in dede
By grace aboue nature / in story we may rede

The clergie the burges / and the comons all
Consyderyng the goodnes of this birgin bright
With tenderes of hert and loue in speciall
Magnified and prayled our lorde god almyght
And blessed Uerburge by day also nyght
Whiche hath preserved of her great charite
Thestre from distruction in extreme necessite

Unto her Myne the people all went
 The clergie before in maner of proceſſion
 Thankyng this birgin with loue feruent
 For her mercy and grace ſhewed them vpon
 Deuoutly knelynge there made oblacion
 Sayeng full ſadly / we ſhall neuer able be
 The place to recompence for this dede of charite

¶ A breue reherſall of the myracles of ſaynt Werburge
 after her tranſlation to Cheſtre. Cap. xxi.

Theſe foreſayd myracles and ſignes celeftiall
 By diuine ſufferaunce ſhewed manifeſtly
 Magnifyen this birgin and bleſſed moyniall
 With mycle worſhypp honour and victoꝝy
 Playnly declaryng vnto your memory
 What ſingular grace / worſhypp / and excellence
 Our ſauour ſhewed for his ſpouſe openly
 As is reherſed at maſſe in her ſequens

To expreſſe all myracles wꝛitten in the place
 In a boke nominate the thꝛid paſſionarye
 It wolde require a longe tyme and ſpace
 To the reders tedious (no meruayle ſothly)
 Where we omytte to wꝛitte of them ſpecially
 But touched in generall vnto your audience
 To reioyce and comfort your hertes inwardly
 As ye may conſidere in her ſequens

Certaynly it is knowen by bokes expreſſe
 Sith that ſaynt Werburge came to Cheſtre cite
 By the power of god and myracle doubtles
 Werburge. r. iiii.

She hath defended the towne from ennemite
From barbarike nations full of crudelite
Of whom we haue shewed with diligence
Preseruyng her seruauntes / and the monastery
As is declared in her true sequence

Also of her goodnes preserved she hase
The sayd towne from fire in extreme necessite
Many diuers tymes to their ioye and solace
Reluyng the citezens in wo and penalite
For it is well knownen by olde antiquite
Sith the holy thryne came to their presence
It hath ben their comfort and gladnes truly
As playnly appereth in her sequens

Also to blynde men she hath gyuen syght
To dombe men speche right perfectly
To desse men their heryng pleasaunt and right
And helth to sicke men repleit with debilitie
Delyuered prisoners from captiuite
Passage to lame men / to mad men intelligence
Suche myracles shewed this blessed lady
As ye may vnderstande in her sequens

Women with childe by her had good delyuerance
Virgins defended from shame and bilany
Her seruauntes were cured from woofull greuaunce
Marchantes and mariners delyuered from ieopardye
Other were saued from hangyng shamfully
A speciall comfort succour and defence
To all carefull creatures sekynge for remedy
By singular grace / as sayth the sequens

No wofull person in payne and wretchednes
Man woman childe / who so euer they be
Comynge to the abbay with perfit mekenes
Maakynge supplicacion to this ladye free
But they departed ioyful and merie
To theyr dwellynge place by her beniuolence
And for their lyuyng had all thyng necessarie
As witten is playnly in her sequens

for whiche great myracles and signes continuall
This blessed Werburge floure of humilite
Of the people is called for grace supernall
Patrones of Chestre / protectrice of the countre
Where next our sauour and his mother Marie
She hath great honour mayle and preeminence
As most condigne to beare the principalite
In witnes wherof recordeth her sequens

This holy abbasse and lady imperiall
Hath ben president in Chestre monasterie
Theyr trust / theyr treasure / and defence speciall
In mycle reuerence .vii. hundreth yere trulie
And so shall continue by grace of god almyghty
To the worldes ende in hie magnificence
To whom be honour worship and glorie
Euer to endure / as sayth her sequens

¶ A charitable mocion and a desyre to all the inhaby-
tauntes within the countie palatine of Chestre for the
monasterie. Cap.xxii.

Hye worthye nobles of the west partye
Considre in your mynde with hye discrecion
The perfitte goodnes of this swete ladye
We mean saynt Werburge nowe at this season
Whiche hath ben your helpe and singular tuicion
And so euer wylbe / haue this in your mynde
When ye to her call with humble supplicacion
Wherefore to the monasterye be neuer unkynde

Remembre / at the foundation of the sayd place
your predeceßours and forefathers redy were
To gyue for their soule helth by singular grace
Parcell of their landes and possessions mere
To our sauour and to saynt Werburge clere
Redy to offre them with humble hert and mynde
In perfit oblation with Hug. Lupe their foundere
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer unkynde

Many helde their landes of the sayd monasterie
By tenure grand seriant / and some by homage
By tenur^r franke almoigne / other by fealtie
With seruiçe de chivaler^r / and some by escuage
Some by petit seriant / and by tenur^r burgage
As in their euidentes and grauntes they may fynde
Tres maners de rentes / with tenur^r billenage
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer unkynde

The place hath speciall franchises and liberte
Hauynge certayne wardes of landes and mariage
Of diuers gentilmen within the sayd counte
All theyr tenauntes and seruauntes haue fre passage
Within all cheshyre without tolle and pillage

Suche auncient freedoms in their dedes they fynde
Gyuen by theyr founders for goffly awauntage
Wherfore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

The erle gabe the place many great freedoms
Within Chestre cite / whiche ben knowen of olde
With singular priuileges and auncient customs
Saynt Werburge faire / with profites manyfolde
That no marchandise shulde be bought ne solde
Enduryng the faire days (in wrytyng as we fynde)
But afore thabbay gate / to haue and to holde
Wherfore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

Therfore lordes barons / ye rulers of the countre
We you now exhorte in our sauour
Discretly conside with your gofflie eie
The myght of this mayden and chaste flour
Shewed by myracles euery day and hour
Whan she was required with true hert and mynde
In all busines she hath ben their protectour
Wherfore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

Whan your forefathers haue ben in great perell
In ieoperdie of lyfe on see and on londe
Or like to be slayne by ennemies in batell
Or taken by warr^e in prison fast bonde
Unto this birgin / as we understonde
Whan they called and cryed with contrite mynde
They escaped all daunger / cam whom safe and sonde
Wherfore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

Marchauntes passynge with marchandise

from lande to lande truly entending
If they were taken with cruell ennemyse
Dreles were put in perill of perishing
If they to this birgin deuoutly praying
Maide supplicacion with humble hert and mynde
Anone they opteyned theyr humble askyng
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer unkynde

If any of you be red with infirmite
With sekenes incurable / or other beracion
As wronges iniuries and other maladie
Unto saynt Werburge makyng intercession
And to her place promysyng an oblacion
With contrite hert and penitent mynde
They were soone cured from all affliction
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer unkynde

And you honest matrons remembre you all
The goodnes of this birgin full of grace
When ye in trauelyng vpon her do call
Or haue any relique sende from the place
ye fortune and spede well in short tyme and space
And diuers maydens louyng a chaste mynde
from bilany ben saued by her purchase
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer unkynde

But eche contray / shire / and congregacion
Some be disposed to vertues generall
And some to the contrarie moued by reason
Following their mynde and appetite sensuall
Haue shewed unkyndnes to the place spirituall
And haue ben sore punysshed / take this in mynde

To all other folowynge and example speciall
Wherefore to the monastery be neuer bnhynde

Ther was neuer man of high nor lowe degree
Lorde / baron / knyght / marchaunt / and burges
Attemptyng to infringe their rightes and libertie
Remaynyng in the same malice and wyckednes
But if they repent shortly theyr busynes
Askyng absolucion to theyr conscience blynde
Vengeance on them doth lyght doutles
Wherefore to the monastery be neuer bnhynde

Diuers malefactours agayne good conscience
Attemptyng to take there seuerall possession
By subtell policy and wrong feyned euidens
By proued perjury and fals collusion
Whiche in theyr iniury and wronge mesprisyon
Without repentauns in theyr consciens blynde
Sodenly haue ben drowed a sharpe punycion
Wherefore to the monastery be neuer bnhynde

Other haue be glad to alienat the patronage
Of certayne churches by malice and enuy
By a fals enquest for theyr owne auantage
Defraudyng the right of the holy monastery
Suche euill doers remaynyng in theyr tyranny
Without satisfaccion in their consciens blynde
Lyke wretches expired mosse myserably
Wherefore to the monastery be neuer bnhynde

Other haue ben besy serching day and nyght
To infringe theyr fraunchis and fridome auncient

By fals recordes oppugnant to ryght
As hath ben proued by persones indifferent
yet they haue procured and sought wronge iugement
Agaynst their libertes in conscience blynde
Sodayne and euill deth folowed them consequent
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

Some other haue be parauenture on late
Studious to disquiet the place the company
And diuers libertes haue alienate
Also tolled their franchis fraudulently
from the sayd place well knowen in memory
Suche mysdoers we moue in conscience blynde
To maende their wronges lest payne come sodeynly
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

Suche malefactours confide nat discretly
Howe all suche landes libertes and fredoms
Were giuen to Christ and ben his patrimonye
And nat allonly to religious persons
for all suche fraunches priuileges possessions
Of charite were giuen of pure conscience and mynde
To god and saynt Werburge with great deuotions
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

Nowe for to make a small conclusion
We well perceyue in auncient bookes olde
All suche transgressours / holdyng their opinion
Obstinate in malice indurate and bolde
Some haue ben slayne / some drowned in water colde
Some shamfully hanged rebukynge their kynde
Some wretchedly departed / some cruciat manyfolde
Wherefore to the monasterie be neuer bnynde

**A litell orison or prayer to the blessed birgine saynte
Merburge by the translatour of this werke. Ca.xiii.**

Blessed Merburge and birgin glorious
Descended by auncetrie of blod victoriall
Doughter to kynges Sulfer^s / and Dymenild^r vertuous
O sufferayne lady and famous moinall
With hert and true mynde on the I call
Thou art my succour / my helpe in all distress
Defende and saue me from peynes infernall
By thy meke prayer swete patrones

O rutilant gemme clerer than the cristall
O redolent rose repleit with suauite
Whiche for the loue of thy spouse eternall
Refused hast all bayne pleasures transetore
Honours / riches / and secular dignite
Nowe regnyng in heuyn as a quene doutles
Praye for thy seruaunt to the lord of mercy
Mekely I beseke the swete patronesse

O sufferayne lady full of singular vertue
Mayndyng most religion from thy infancy
Elect to the a spouse our sauour Jesu
Professed obedience at the house of Ely
Where thou obserued the sensuals the
By grace aboue nature playn to expresse
Optye me power to haue victory
Ageynst myn ennemyes swete patrones

O floure of birgins and comly creature
Syngyng with angels in the heuenly toure

Transcendyng the saphir and diamounde pure
In worship praisyng beaute and decur
What tong can reherse thy ioy and honour
Whiche is ineffable for man to expresse
Beseeke thy spouse our blessyd sauour
To graunte me mercy swete patrones

For thy great vertu and hie discrecion
Chosen thou was a pyler here to be
Of diuers monasteryes to encrease religion
By thy godly doctryne and humilite
Exsample thou gaue of perfyt charite
Unto thi subgettis as a kynde maistres
Helpe me thy seruaunt of thy benignite
To please my maker swete patrones

No maruell it was thought thy subgettis all
Were vertuouse and perfect in contemplacion
Under suche a ruler a hed and principall
Whose godly example and exortation
Were correspondent accordyng in one
Thy precept and deed were bñit with mekenes
In this bale misery be my protection
I humble the require swete patrones

Glorious abbasse and floure of chastite
Carboncle shenyng bothe day and nyght
All this region by thy noble progenie
And by the is decorat vnder god almyght
The presens of thy blessyd body right
Reioisith thy seruauntis in all distress
Thou art our refuge and lanterne of light

Succour thy seruantes swete patrones

**O pereles princes lady imperiall
O gemme of holynes and noble president
Comfort to all creatures in paynes thrall
Releuyng all secke feble and impotent
A myrrour of mekenes to euery pacient
Whose myracles magnifyen thy great goodnes
Defende thy seruaint from greuous turment
By thy supplicacion swete patronesse**

**O noble sufferayne and singular protectrice
Of thy true subiectes by speciall grace
In all necessite a sure mediatrice
From greuous oppression preseruyng thy place
A lanterne of lyght in eche wofull case
To illumine thy people plunged in heuynes
With great consolacion and gostly solace
Nowe lyghen our conscience swete patronesse**

**Swete louely lady mekely I the praye
For thy great mekenes and perfect charite
Make thou intercession both nyght and day
For thy true seruantes vnto the trinite
That we may opteyne here grace and mercy
And of our synne to haue forgyuenes
Afterwarde to come to eternall glorie
Helpe nowe and euer swete patronesse**

**A breue cōclusion of this litell werke vnto the reders
by the translatour.**
Uerburge

**Cap. xiiii.
f. i.**

With tremblinge penne and hand full of dede
In termes rude translate nowe haue we
The noble hystorie of saynt Werburge in dede
Besekyng all them for their good humanite
Whiche this litell proces shall beholde and se
For to adde and minishe and cause reformation
Where nede requireth after your discrecion

At her lyfe historiall example may take
Euery great estate / quene / duches / and lady
To encrease in vertue / and synne to forsake
To obserue mekenes and prayer deuoutly
With pacience of hert / and almesdede truly
If thou be widowe / her lyfe well folowynge
Thou mayst be sure in blis to haue a wonnyng

If thou be religious / wearyng blacke vesture
Take good example at this holy abbasse
Her lyfe wyll teche the how thou shult endure
In holy religion / opteynyng mycle grace
With mekenes / meditation / mesure in eche place
And howe thou shalt kepe thy sensualls thre
Consideryng in heuen thy rewarde to be

If thou be a birgin of hie or low degre
Takynge imitation of this birgin bryght
Thou mayst well obserue the floure of chastite
And thy spouse shalbe the lorde most of myght
On whom if thou attende redy day and nyght
Thou shalt haue merite as recordeth scripture
With .v. wise virgins after thy departure

The cause mouryng vs this werke to begyn
It was to auoyde slouth and idelnes
And most for the loue of this holy virgin
Whiche is our sufferayn lady and patrones
As for bawdy balades full of wretchednes
And wanton wyld geftis / we purpose none to make
For drede of losyng tyme / clothed in besture blake

Go forth litell boke / Jesu be thy spede
And saue the alway from mytreportyng
Whiche art compiled for no clerke in dede
But for marchaunt men / hauyng litell lernyng
And that rude people therby may haue knowyng
Of this holy virgin / and redolent rose
Which hath ben kept full longe tyme in close

To all auncient poetes litell boke submytte the
Whilom flouryng in eloquence facundious
And to all other / whiche present now be
fyrst to maister Chaucer / and Ludgate sentencious
Also to preignaunt Barkley / nowe beyng religious
To inuenture Skelton and poet laureate
Praye them all of pardon both erly and late

If there be any thyng within this litell boke
Pleasaunt to the audience / contentyng the mynde
We praye all reders / whan they thereon do loke
To gyue thanks to god maker of mankynde
Nat to the translatour ignoraunt and blynde
For euery good dede / done in any cost
It cometh allonly of the holy gost.

Werburge.

l.ii.

Almyghty god both one two and thre
We desire the with humble supplicacion
Saue holy churche of thy benigneite
And all ministres in holy religion
Preserue the kyngis grace the Peeris the region
Defende our monasterie and thy seruantes all
And graunt vs by grace to come to blis eternall
Finis.

A balade to the auctour.

O thou disciple of Cully most famous
Nowe flourishyng in the floures of glorious eloquēce
Like as appereth by your stile sacundius
Full worthe laude prayse and preeminence
Put forth your werkes full sure of sentence
Whose auctour / what though vncertayne be his name
Of all the reders exalted shalbe in fame.

Alas why shulde this delicious werke
Thus surely sette by pured science
To be examined by my rudenes all derke
Whiche knowe full well myn insufficiency
Sith I haue lerned by longe experience
That dulled age in werkes of poetry
Must nedes gyue to poetes place and victory

Glorious god and kyng eternall
We magnifie thy name as is but ryght
Sith thou gaue to vs a floure most riall
Redolent in cronicles with historicall syght
Whiche nowe is departed from this temporall lyght
The present pere of this translacon
An. D. xiii. of Christis incarnation
Cuius anime propicietur deus.

An other balade.

O frutefull hystore / o digne memoriall
Embawmed with doctrine of vertues infinite
With termes exquisite / and sence rectoriall
To spirituall hertes a singular delite
Fragrant and facunde / of englishe exquisite
Holsome in doctrine / for those that it desire
Auaunce you to rede it / for it is exquisite
Followynge the effect to kepe you from hell fire

Reioyse Chestre / reioyse ye religious
And thanke your maker of his beniuolence
That hath you gyuen suche treasure precieuse
Advocatrice / in your most indigence
O virgin werburge / of double excellence
Conserue thy seruantes dayly familier
Preseruyng them from inconuenience
The for tensue / that art theyr lode sterre

Amonges the whiche to thyn honour
One of thy clientes / with morall retorique
Hath chaunged newly / o mayde most swete flour
Thy legende latine / to our language publique
Preserue his soule / and make hym domestique
Within the heuyns / in whiche that thou art sonke
With deth preuent / he myght nothyng replique
Harry Bradeshaa of Chestre abbay monke

O cruell deth / o thesse vindicatye
To persons vertuous ennemy mortall
Of this good clerke thou hast abbregeed the lyfe
Preuentynge hym with thy dede stronge fatall

yet in despite of thy most venomous gall
He hath translate this legende profitable
And left it for holosome memoriaill
To all his sequaces / a gyft most couenable

With polysthed termes / and good sence litterall
No place there boyde / but vertue aboundeth
Theffect is manifest : for science ouer all
Rethorically thy sentence groundeth
All vices surely it confoundeth
She wyng the legende of this mayde pure
Her shenyng lyfe eche where redoundeth
Suche steppes solowynng / we hope in them tendure

An other balade to saynt werburge
With hert contrite accepte my supplicacion
Apprynge my fraylete and lyfe vacillaunt
Renegate and contumace in all obstinacion
Betwapt with all synne / detestable and recreaunt
Troughsafe to supplie Jesu and geat graunt
Remission to haue of my synnes generall
Greuous and thrall / that I may the auant
A gentill Werburge / to thy doctrine me call

Wherefore thy father / thy mother Ermenild,
Enclined both to dedes catholique
Ruffine and Kenrede / thy bretherne were fulfild,
Both with great grace / through martyrdomme both like
With diuers of thy hymne magnifique
Redact in the catholique papall
Geat me suche grace to boyde all synnes inique
And gentill Werburge to thy doctrine me call

With faithfull clemmes / thy soule was sure preserved
 Ever contynuyng in doctrine celicall
 Refusyng vanite / from vertue neuer swarued
 But in all grace remaynyng principall
 Unto thy deth exhortyng great and small
 Ruled to be / to the preceptes diuine
 Gouverned by grace / were thy disciples all
 A gentill Werburge call me to suche doctrine

Wordly felicitye abiect from my courage
 Envy and pride / with lustes voluptuous
 Rancorous cupidite myn hert sore do aswage
 Byng oymntmentes sanatiue for my sores dolorous
 Unclose thy succours / and be beniuolous
 Redy to be preseruyng me from pyne
 Gouverne my lyfe from all actes daungerous
 And gentill Werburge call me to thy doctrine

Be nowe beniuolent / whan I shall on the call
 Unto thy slaue / as my trust hath ben sure
 Leue vnto me for a memoriall
 Knowlege effectuall of thy lyfe pure
 Luyng ther after / and so tendure
 Ever in purite my lyfe to contynue
 yeldyng thankes for thy most hollosme lure
 Christ ouer vs holde his hande / al vices teshue. Amē.

¶ And thus endeth the lyfe and historie of saynt Wer-
 burge. Imprinted by Richarde Pynson / printer to the
 kynges noble grace / With priuilege to hym graunted
 by our souerayne lorde the kyng. A. M. D. xxi.



GLOSSARY.



INDEX.

GLOSSARY.

This Glossary is not intended so much to explain, as to exhibit in a tabular form those words now nearly obsolete which were in use at the time the poem was written.

A.

ACCEPTRE, accepted, 80.
 ADRED, alarmed, 160.
 AGO, agone, gone, 116.
 ALBE, (tunic ?) a white vesture ordered to be worn by the clergy in administering the eucharist, 154.
 ALIENAT, alienated, 203, 204.
 ALLONLY, all only, only, 174, 204, 209.
 AMPLIAT, enlarged, 148.
 ANENDES, anent, in reference to, 100.
 AT AFTER, after, 95, 193.
 ATTEMPTED, tempted, 191.
 ATTEMPTEN, plural of attempt, 100.
 AUDACITY, courage, 2.

B.

BEFOUND, found, 8.
 BEN, be, are, 1, 75, 111, 117, 134, 151, 186, 189, 202, 204.
 BENESON, benediction, 90.
 BESEKE, beseech, 189.
 BESELY, busily, 1.
 BESYNES, business, 2.
 BORDE, "high board lord," those seated at the upper table at a feast, 60.
 BOTH TWO, both the one and the other, 15, 57, 58.
 BOWNE, bent, prepared, 162.
 BRENNED, burned, 34, 39, 49, 139, 141.

BRENT, burnt, 60.
 BRUTES, uncivilised people, 149, 152.
 BROWDRED, embroidered, 60.
 BUXUM, obedient, 1.
 BYFORNE, before, 38.

C.

CADUCE, frail, feeble, 115, 118.
 CANARY, canopy, 146.
 CARLE, churl, clown, 38.
 CELEBRATE, celebrated, 146, 181.
 CELICALL, heavenly, 213.
 CEMETERIE, 151, 184.
 CEsSE, to stop, verb act. 195.
 CHERE, countenance, 102.
 CHEST, coffin, 125.
 CIRCUMFULCED, surrounded by brightness, 76, 150, *circumfulgeo*.
 CLERKE, educated persons, 4, 209.
 CLYPPED, called, 32.
 COMEN, plur. of come, 128, 144.
 COMPULACYON, computation, 5.
 CONDIGNE, worthy, 199.
 CONGREGATE, congregated, 188.
 CONOMINAT, akin, 191.
 CONSECRATE, consecrated, 93.
 CONYNGE, skill, 134.
 CORONATE, crowned, 115, 144, 147, 158, 175, 176, 181.
 CORPORACE, corporate, a linen cloth spread under the chalice and paten at the eucharist, 154.

GLOSSARY.

COST, charge, also, side, 177, 182.
 COSTY, a son coté, on his side, 164.
 COSYNS, kinsmen generally, 25, 170, 171, 191.
 COTIDIAN, daily, 80, 143.
 COUNCEYLED, concealed, 45.
 COUNTERED, encountered, 9.
 COVETISE, covetousness, 2.
 CREATE, created, 2, 190.
 CREATURE, creator, 1, &c. &c.
 CRUCIATE, tormented, 101, 166, 204.
 CRUELITY, cruelty, 198.
 CUBICLE, bedchamber, 1, 77.
 CUP, "to sit between the cup and the wall," probably a common term for a drunkard, 2.
 CURE, a care or charge; as of a parish, &c. 54, 87, 107.

D.

DAN. master. 185, 186, from Dominus.
 DARING, suffering pain, 98, from dare, pain. *Bailey's Dict.*
 Dredefully daringe, i. e. slinking along for fear, as if they would hide themselves, from view.
 "The dere, in the dellun,
 They droupen and daren."
Anturs of Arthur at the Tarnowathelan.
 "In this dale I droupe and dare.
 For dern dedes that done me dere."—*Minst.*
 "Now or thai darend all for drede,
 That war before so stout and gay."—*Ibid.*
 "Blotir," to squat, skowke, ly close to the ground like a daring larke, or af-frighted fowle.—*Cotgrave.*
 DECORATE, decorated, 75, 96, 120, 126, 206.
 DECAUR, 146, decur, 206, honour.
 DEDICATE, dedicated, 104.
 DEPAYRED, decayed, 125, deperir, *Fr.* dis-perdere, *Lat.*

DEROGATION, damage, 173.
 DESCRIBEN, plur. of describe, 8.
 DESCRYPTYON, for destruction, 97.
 DESIDERY, desire, 56, 108.
 DESSE, high desse, seat of state, 61.
 DEVOYRE, devoir, respect, 25, 58, 126.
 DIGHT, clothed, 144.
 DOLOUR, grief, 167.
 DO WAY, begone, put aside, 67, 83.
 DONE, plur. of do, 67.
 DYFFERRE, defer, delay, 30.
 DYONE, worthy, 109, 152, 211.
 DYLATED, magnified, published, 9, 75, 96, 150, 168.
 DYLECTACON, delight, 27, 155.
 DYSSENT, spent, 94.
 DYVERSITY, dissension, 89.
 DYVYDENT, dividing, 8, 10.

E.

EDIFIED, built, from edifier, *Fr.* 151, 153, 158, 177.
 ELECTE, elected, 85, 93, 159, 190.
 ELEVATE, raised up, 48, 125, 126, 161.
 EMPAIRED, injured, 160.
 EMPEIRYNG, inflaming? 195.
 ENDURATE, hardened, cruel, 159, 191.
 ENFORCE, strengthen, 84.
 ENORMENTES, ornaments, 154, 156, 165, 180, 184.
 ENOWNED, inurned, environed, 127.
 ENQUIRED, for required, 80.
 ENSUING, pursuing, 41; during, 177.
 EQUIPOLENT, of equal power, 11.
 EQUIVALENT, proportional, 167.
 EXPULSE, expel, 6, 88, 111, 121, 142, 151, 152, 177.
 EXTINGCTED, extinguished, 196.

F.

FACUNDE, 211.
 FACUNDIOUS, eloquent, 209, 210.

GLOSSARY.

FEMINITY, womanhood, 61.

FERE, 76; in fere, 11, 59, 164, together in company. See Chaucer, *Cant. Tales*, v. 4748, 4814. Ang. S. *foera, fera, socius*.

FERE, far, 63.

FISNAMY, physiognomy, 103, 126.

FLOURES OF EXPERIENCE, of approved worth, 5.

FLOURYNGE, flourishing, 9, 23, 34, 135, 181, 209.

FOLLOWEN, follow, 97.

FRAGYLL, light, vain, 81, 103.

FRAGYLYTE, light conduct, 69.

FRAYLTE, inconstancy of mind, 3.

G.

GALWAY SCOT, Scotch from Galloway, 173.

GALWEDY, Galloway, from mediæval Latin word, *Gallovidia*, 162.

GATE, road, at no gate, no where, by no means, 89.

— got, begot, 11, 12, 13, 14, 91, 118.

GAUNTES, Gannets, or any geese, 97, 98.

GEAF, perhaps from gavel, progenies masculine; vide Skinner in *voc. forens*. Geaf therefore seems here to mean male descendant; of his eldest son Shem descending plain, i. e. in Saxon's tongue, geaf, 14.

GEAT, get, 212.

GLEBE, earth, soil, 9; vital glebe, mortal body, 129.

GOET, Goths, 173.

GOTES, Goths, 140, 162. Goets and Gotes, being used in connection with Danes, probably means Goths; but as they are also used with Galway and Galwedy, they may refer to the Manxmen, who at one time possessed Galloway.

GRAFFE, graft, shoot, 75.

GUERDON, recompence, deserts, 84.

H.

HAD UPON, placed upon, 49.

HALLYNGE, aulæum, hangings, 61; "An hallynge, auleum, anabatrū, *Versus*. Vela vel aulæa cortinæ sunt anabatra." *Catholicon anglicanum* MS. Dict. inedited, dated 1483.

HALL, usually a large tent for warlike uses, seems to mean the complete set of hangings for a chamber. Thus Margery Argentine in 1427 bequeaths "a steyned hall."—*Rokewode's Suffolk*, p. 290.

HARNEYS, armour, 9.

HASE, have or hast, 117, &c.

HE, for she, 23.

HOLLY, holily, 95.

HUMANYTE, courtesy, 25.

HYGHT, named, 15, 16.

HISTORIALL, historical, 10, 15, 208.

I.

ICHE, each, 112.

IERARCHYES, Hierarchies, 61, 115.

INFORTUNE, misfortune, 194.

INSTRUCTE, instructed, 75.

IN SYGHT, in presence, 83, 161.

INTERIOUSLY, internally, 183.

JUTES, people of Jutland, 6.

K.

KYNDE, course of Kynde, course of nature, 98, 106, 193.

L.

LAD, one of low condition. Lad to wed a lady is inconvenient, 38.

LATTH, probably lightening, akin to laye, or lowe, a flame, 138.

GLOSSARY.

LEED, laid, buried, 19.
 LENT, dwelling, abiding, Sax. word, Lenge.
 to dwell, 98, 119.
 LETTEN, let, permitted, 183.
 LETTYNGE, obstructing, 187.
 LEVE YE ME, believe me, 32, 84.
 LEVER, rather, preferred, 76.
 LOSE, destroy, 39.
 LOVERS, friends, 47.
 LUSTY eloquence, vigorous, 37.
 LYCENSE, leave, farewell, 65, 78, permis-
 sion, 6, 36, 43, 99; 136, 152, 158, 186.
 LYHTNESSE, nimble, quick, 114.
 LYST, like, desire, 135.
 LYEN, plur. of lye, 11.

M.

MACHORYTE, anchorite, 103.
 MACULATE, defiled, 104, 126.
 MAGNIFIEN, magnify, 169, 197, 207.
 MAKEN, make, 134.
 MARGARYTE, pearl, or flower, daisy, 16.
 MAY, maiden, young woman, 27.
 MEAN, intercession, 172. "Meene, or me-
 dyatowre, *mediator*."—*Prompt. Parv.*
 "Woman that is meane for any man.
 advocatte.—*Palsgrave*.
 MEDE, reward, 13, 17, 18.
 MEDLED, mingled inconveniently, 117.
 MEMORALL, memorable, 8.
 MEMORATIVE, memorable, 41, 153.
 MEMOROUS, memorable, 6, 11, 104, 185.
 MENDES, amends, 47.
 MERCYABLE, pitiful, 95, 102, 175.
 MINISSE, diminish, 208.
 MONYALL, recluse, nun. 4, 81, 115, 145,
 168, 197, 205; monialis, *Lat.* moniale,
 Fr.
 MOYNES, nun, 55, 59, 68, 80, 93, 130;
 moinesse, *old Fr.*
 MUTATION, taking the contrary course, 190.
 MYCLE, much, great, 144, 145, 146, 153,
 157, 172, 174, &c.
 MYNSTERS, servants, waiters, 64, 94.

N.

NAT, not, 135, &c. &c.
 NAY, it is no nay, there is no denying it,
 134.
 NE, nor, 54, 83, 100, 102, 117, 148.
 NOMINATE, named, 20, 22, 87, 88, 93,
 &c. &c.
 NOMYNTON, nomination, mention, 7.

O.

OBSERVEEN, plur. of observe, 1.
 ODIBLE, odious, 138.
 OE, before, 95, 169, 172, 194.
 ORDINANCE, direction, preparation, 62.
 ORELS, or else, 36, 38, 147, 202.
 OUT OF PRESENCE, out of sight, 41.

P.

PARAGE, parentage, 69.
 PARESSEHEN, parishioners, 194.
 PASSING, surpassing, 23, 27.
 PAYNYMS, pagans, 140, 141.
 PAYNT, flatter, 2.
 PENALITY, punishment, 174, 198.
 POLLERS, plunderers, 89.
 POLLUTE, defiled, 129.
 POLLYNGE, pillaging, 139.
 POLYTYKE, sagacious, 20.
 PRENOMINATE, forenamed, 139, 190.
 PREORDINATE, predestined, 143.
 PREPARAT, prepared, 1, 62, 114.
 PREPOTENT, very powerful, 14, 76, 182.
 PRETENDED, foreshewed, portended, 28.
 PROGENY, progenitors, 38.
 PROLONGING, postponing, 33.
 PROMISSION, permission, 129.
 PROMYTT or promyt, promise, 178, 189.
 PROMYTTYNGE, 163, 166.
 PROMOTERS, informers, 89.
 PRYCE, prize, preeminence, 9.

GLOSSARY.

PRYME, daybreak, 40.
 PRYMATE, supreme governor, 1, 4.
 PUDICALL, chaste, modest, 142.
 PULCHRYTUDE, 30.
 PYGHT, pitched, set up, 162, 181.
 PYNE, sorrow, 213.
 PYNNE, confine, 98. "Pynnyne, or put
 yn a pynfold, intrudo, detrudo." *Prompt.*
parv. Ang. Sax. pyndan. includere.

R.

RECIDIVATION, relapse, 150.
 RECOURSED, ran back again, 42.
 REDACT, 212, from redactus, collected;
 gathered into the general body.
 REPUTED, rejected, cast aside, 57.
 REGALTY, regality, royalty, 16.
 RELIQUE, 121, 124, 127, 143, 144, 146,
 153, 202.
 REMANENT, remaining, 152.
 REPAIRED, repaired, 180.
 RESEMBLED, reassembled, 119.
 RESOLUTION, decay, resolving to original
 state, 123, 125, 129.
 RESOLVE, dissolve, melt, 54, 129, 130, 142.
 REVESSHED, revested, clothed again, 127.
 REWARDED, rewarded, 84.
 ROBORATE, corroborate, confirm, 91.
 ROWME, place, rank, 56.
 RUDE, uneducated, 127.
 RUTILANT, glittering, brilliant, 128, 145,
 205.
 RYED, rife, frequent, 140.
 RYDDE, quit, relieved from, 109.

S.

SAD, saad, sayd. Sedate, discrete, 2, 23,
 24, 27, 29, 38, 69, 81, 149, 155, 173.
 SADNESS, discretion, 51, 57, 69.
 SANCTYMONIAL, holy person, 96.
 SAPIENTLY, wisely, 37.

SAUTYNGE, assaulting, 163.
 SAYNE, plur. of say, 14.
 SEGREGATE, separated, 159.
 SENDE for sent, 10, 148, 149, 152, 156,
 165, 183, 188, 202.
 SENSUALS, essentials, 205, 208.
 SEQUACES, successors, 212.
 SEQUENS, 197. The name of a particular
 kind of service book. Lat. med. Se-
 quentiarius, sequentialis. "Sequences."
 were chanted between the lessons at
 mass.

"Fist mainte sequence et mainte hymne."

SEYN, Sitting, Synod, 90.
 SHALMES, musical instrument, 63.
 SOTHE, truth, 2.
 SPYRE, spike, tendril, 60. Corn spires
 when the flowers are forming. "Spyre
 of corne or herbe, hastula."—*Prompt.*
Parv. "Spyre of corne, barbe du ble."
 —*Palgrave.*
 In the Wicliffe version, Isaiah 35 7.
 "Grenenesse of rehed and Spier schal
 growe in denpes in whiche dwelliden
 dragouns bifor" and Isai. 18. 2. "Pa-
 pirus is a kynde of spier so great that
 bokis mowen be maid thereof." In a
 curious treatise on herbs, &c. Arund.
 MS. 42. "Pliny says, c. 81. ther is
 calamus scriptoris, swuche a stable as
 scryueners writen with, and that is a
 reed spere; for by olde tyme, ar us of
 penne were fowndyn men wryten with
 reedspyre, &c. p. 55. 6.

STABLE, steady, firm, 27, 32.
 STREETS, the milky way, 28: In German
 it is termed "die Milch-strasse"—as
 Phœbus surpassed other planets or stars,
 so doth, &c. perhaps, however, the
 word is a misprint for "starres."
 STUDY, "stode styll in a study," mused in
 perplexity, was in a brown study, 98.
 SUFFERAUNT, suffering, patient, 92.

GLOSSARY.

SUING, ensuing, following, 61.
 SUPERNALL, from above, 41.
 SUPPLE HER ROWME, supply her place, 93.
 SUPPLIE, supplicate, 212.
 SURGES, wax tapers, 144, 154, Fr.
 cierges, "cereus cereolus, serge." Vo-
 cab. Lat. Eng. Roy. MS. ix. c. xvii.
 "Ceroferarius, a bearer of serge." Harl.
 MS. 2257.
 SYKERNES, security, 50.
 SYTH, since, 4.

T.

TAMYSMOUTH, mouth of Thames, 139.
 THRALL, bondage, 99, 113, 115, 117, 193,
 207, 212.
 — v. imprisoned, 115, 183.
 THO, those, 25, 58.
 TIMOROUS, occasioning alarm, 162.
 TOLLYNG, knocking, pulling, 193.
 TORTUOUS, torturing, 171.
 TOYNES, tunes, (Prologue of J. T.)
 TRANSCEND, pass over, 189.
 TRANSLACYON, removal, 124, 128, 146,
 159, 185.
 TRANSLATED, removed, 11, 79, 124, 128,
 153, 157, 181. converted, changed, 48,
 49, 86, 97.
 TRAYNE, trap, 39, 43.
 TROW YE, think ye, 83.
 TUCYON, government, 5, 51. protection,
 111, 136, 145.
 TUMYLATE, buried, 26, 108, 126, 158.
 TWYN, tine, loss, sorrow, 160.

U.

UKNOWINGE, unknown, 99.

UNKYNDE, unnatural, unhealthy, 167.
 UNNETH, scarcely, 46. Saxon adv.
 URE, use, 64; Ure for use occurs in writers
 about the age of Bradshaw.
 USING HIM, conducting himself, 87.

V.

VALAUNCE, valour, 9.
 VARNAUNT, verdant, 23, 104, 129.
 VENARE, VENERY, hunting, 8, 149.
 VENGEBLE, revengeful, 39.
 VERAY, verily, 100.
 VIRGINALL, virginlike, 23, 68, 110.
 VOLUPTE, voluptuousness, 81.
 VILAYNE PEOPLE, of no rank, 36, 38.

W.

WANDELES, Vandals, 140.
 WETE, know, 82.
 WIS, e wis, I know, 156.
 WHOME, home, 189, 192, 201.
 WHYLOM, formerly, 3, 4, 20, 21, 117, 136,
 147, 209. Idleness whylom, former
 idleness, 3.
 WODELY, madly, 163.
 WOO, woe begone, sorrowful, 68.
 WROKEN, from wreke, revengeful, 39.

Y.

YCHEON, each one, 113.
 YERLE, early, 165.
 YLNE, evil, or idleness, 28.
 YMPE, graft, scion, 75.
 YOURE, yore, long ago, 60.

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- Alfrydus, 5, 138. Alfredus, Alredus, Aluredus, see Alredus, Biog. Dict. born at Beverley in Yorkshire, a secular priest, canon and treasurer of St. John's, Beverley. Wrote a History of Britain from the settlement of Brutus! to the year 1126, in which year he died. Hearne published an edition of his History, at Oxford, 1716, with a preface.
- Alle, King of Northumberland, 7.
- Alnot, servant to Werburge at Wedon, 101: cruelly treated by her bailiff, 101: who is miraculously punished by a distortion of his head, but afterwards healed, 101, 102: murdered by thieves, buried at Stow besyde Bukbrydge, miracles displayed on his account, 103. Wilson, in the first edition of his English Martyrology, states that a festival in honor of Alnot was observed on the 24th of February, but in his second fixes the 25th of November as the day of solemnity.
- Alve, 90, Alvechurch in the diocese of Worcester.
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